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Published quarterly since 1932 by Phi Beta Kappa. *Publication Office*: Box 2-W, Richmond 5, Virginia. *Editorial and Circulation Offices*: 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington 9, D. C. *Subscription Rates*: $1.00 a copy, $4.00 one year, $7.00 two years, $9.00 three years, foreign and Canadian—$.50 a year additional for postage. *Advertising Office*: 217 Canner Street, New Haven 11, Connecticut. *National Retail Distributor*: B. DeBoer, 102 Beverly Road, Bloomfield, New Jersey.

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 27 *Spring, 1958* NUMBER 2

# The Devil and Soviet Russia

HAROLD J. BERMAN

AN OLD LADY WHO COULD NEVER BRING herself to speak ill of anyone was asked what she thought of the Devil. "Well," she replied after a pause, "he is very hard-working!"

The old lady understated the Devil's virtues. He is also very intelligent. He knows how to win friends and influence people. In the words of Bishop Emrich of Michigan, writing on *Some Neglected Aspects of Communism*, "the Devil is not a derelict on 'skid row.' He is not a 'bum'; for this type of person is weak, pathetic, disorganized, lacking in will, sick, and not strong enough to stand against a single policeman. . . . The Devil is quite different. . . . He is patient . . . well organized, disciplined, persuasive, and attractive."

What makes him the Devil, says Bishop Emrich, is that "with all his virtues he is going in the wrong direction; and since he possesses virtues, he goes in the wrong direction effectively. The Devil, says traditional Christian thought with profound insight, is a fallen angel."

In both Soviet and American thinking there is a strong strain of puritanism which tends to turn opponents into enemies, enemies into devils, and devils into ugly monsters. An American reading

HAROLD J. BERMAN, a professor at Harvard Law School, is also a research associate and member of the executive committee of the Russian Research Center of Harvard University. He is the author of several books on Soviet law, as well as a book of essays entitled *The Russians in Focus*.



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what is printed in Soviet literature about life in the United States can only laugh at the fantastic caricatures that are presented to the Russian people as sober realities. It is a bitter truth that Russians who get a chance to read what is written about life in the Soviet Union in American newspapers, magazines and books—and today more and more Russians get that chance—also find, often, not reality but a ridiculous distortion of reality.

In August and September of 1955, I met in Moscow about ten United States senators and representatives who were taking advantage of the new "Geneva spirit" to get a firsthand glimpse of what they previously had known mainly from newspaper accounts and committee reports. Without exception they manifested great surprise, often amounting to amazement, at what they saw. In particular they said they had expected to find the morale of the people and the standard of living much lower than they appeared to be.

In May of 1957 in Moscow, I told this to the head of one of the largest American communications networks, and I added that I thought the American congressmen had expected to find barbed wire in the streets and people walking around with their heads hanging and their bodies bent. He replied, "Well, that's what I had expected to find."

Of the dozens of American tourists whom I met during two visits to Russia, the overwhelming majority said they found conditions of life in Russia much better than they had anticipated. The list includes newspaper editors, businessmen, college professors, college students, agricultural experts, women television broadcasters—and American specialists on Soviet affairs! Many of them said, half in despair and half in jest, "What am I going to say when I get back to the United States?"

It is not for the Russians to complain, of course, if Americans have too black a picture of their country; the Soviet policy of secrecy has been one of the important contributing causes of our misconceptions. But our own press and radio, our own political propaganda and our own scholarship also bear an important share of the responsibility.

Yet the real reason is deeper—deeper than Soviet secrecy,



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deeper than American one-sidedness in reporting. The fact is that together with a great deal of rubbish there are also excellent accounts of daily life in the Soviet Union by American correspondents in Russia, and there are many American books which analyze Soviet institutions in an objective and scholarly manner. But American readers of these reports and books all too often simply reject, subconsciously, those images which conflict with their preconceptions.

Two years ago an American newspaper correspondent in Moscow wrote an account of the May Day parade in which he described people singing and dancing in the streets and enjoying themselves thoroughly. His newspaper published the account, but at the same time it ran an editorial in which it portrayed an embittered Russian people forced by their hated government to demonstrate in favor of a revolution which they did not want.

The correspondent, in recounting this to me, said that he thereupon wrote a letter to his editor in which he said, "I was there—I saw it—they were not bitter, they were happy, they were having a good time." The editorial writer wrote back, in effect, that they may have appeared happy, but that actually they could not have been happy, in view of the evils of the system under which they live.

It is probably fruitless to argue about whether or not Russians are happy. It is of critical importance, however, to recognize that *the notion that because communism is evil the people who live under it must be wretched is based on a false conception of evil.*

It is a false conception of evil which assumes that men who believe in evil doctrines—such as the doctrine of world revolution or the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat—cannot at the same time work to accomplish great humanitarian benefits. It is an elementary fact, for example, that under the leadership of the Communist party of the Soviet Union the number of doctors in Russia increased from about 20,000 in 1917 to about 300,000 in 1957, and that in the same period and under the same leadership illiteracy declined from over 50 per cent to less than 5 per cent.

It is a false conception of evil which assumes that men who or-



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dered the shooting of Hungarian women and children attempting to flee from terror could not at the same time sponsor a series of reforms designed to humanize conditions of detention in Soviet labor camps and to improve the system of criminal trials in the interest of the accused. The assumption sounds so plausible—yet it is contradicted not only in the particular case of the Soviet leadership in 1956 but also countless times in history. Did not Cromwell, the great restorer of English liberties, treat the Irish with barbaric cruelty? Did not Americans who fought for the inalienable rights of "all men" at the same time buy and sell slaves?

A group of prominent American lawyers visited Russia in 1956 in order to observe the Soviet legal system in operation. One of them later published an account of his impressions, the gist of which was that the Soviet legal system, despite some superficial resemblances to the legal systems of civilized countries, is *necessarily* a sham and a farce since the political leaders can and do rely heavily on force and secrecy as instruments of policy, and have absolute power to change the law as they will. Further, he argued, where there is no belief in God there can be no just system for the adjudication of disputes. In view of the satisfaction which all righteous people can derive from this reasoning, it is disconcerting to note that the great system of Roman law was developed under tyrants who employed terror against their enemies, who had absolute power, and who did not believe in God.

Is it really possible that Joseph Stalin, a cruel despot who ordered hundreds of thousands of people suspected of political opposition sent to labor camps in remote regions of Siberia without even the pretense of a fair trial, at the same time established a system of law and justice designed to operate fairly and objectively in nonpolitical cases? It is not only possible: it is a fact. But why should it appear strange?

Our notion that the tyrant can only do wrong is linked, as I have suggested, to our puritan tradition, with its fire-and-brimstone concept of hell. It is linked also to our national immaturity which leads us to see moral issues in terms of black and white, "good guys" versus "bad guys." It is linked, in addition, to an un-



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conscious desire to cover up our own lack of high common purpose by creating an external symbol of evil, a Moby Dick, through which we find a release from our frustrations.

The fire-and-brimstone theory of totalitarianism, popularized in Orwell's *1984* and expounded in learned terms by many of our leading scholars, is comforting to us. Like the Pharisee we can say, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

Such self-righteousness blinds us to the true nature of evil. In the Bible the Devil tempts Christ with bread, with power over all the kingdoms of the world, and with miracles. So the totalitarian state offers its followers economic security, political power and sensational technological progress—all in return for one thing: absolute subservience to the high priest of these gods, the party.

But why speak of the positive achievements of the Soviet system, people often ask, when the most important feature of that system is the lack of freedom to defy the party line? And even granting that American writers have exaggerated the violence, injustice, bureaucracy and poverty of life under the Soviet regime, why should we advertise that fact? Don't we thereby weaken ourselves in our fight against communism?

The first answer is that if we have begun to test truth in terms of how useful it is politically, we have already lost the most important battle in the fight against communism. The second answer is that it is only by giving full credit to the positive achievements of the Soviet system that we can prepare ourselves to meet its challenge.

The Soviet system as it exists in popular imagination—with 20 million prisoners in Siberian labor camps, workers ground down by management, every tenth person an informer, people afraid to talk about anything—is no challenge to us at all. Such a system could not survive a single major crisis.

The Soviet system which actually has been created is quite different. It is a working totalitarianism, a viable totalitarian order, capable of surviving the death of its leading personalities, capable, very likely, of surviving even a defeat in war. It is a system which



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gives promise of achieving the very goals it has set for itself: economic security, political power and technological progress—by the very means it proclaims: absolute subservience to party discipline and the party line.

The challenge of this system is that it meets certain real needs of twentieth-century man—the need for unity and the need for a common social purpose.

It is of no use to fight communism by showing that the materialist aims which it proclaims can be achieved better by democratic means, since the underlying appeal of communism is not only in its aims but also—and primarily—in the process of mobilizing people to achieve those aims. By creating a mobilized social order, the Communist party provides peaceful outlets for service, self-sacrifice, discipline and other virtues usually associated with military life.

If we really want to defeat communism, there is only one way to do it. That way is so obvious one would be embarrassed to speak of it if it were not for the fact that it is the one thing that people who talk about fighting communism generally fail to mention. We must construct a social order in which the goals of justice, mercy and morality take precedence over economic security, political power and technological progress, and we must freely, through voluntary associations, pour into that social order the same spirit of service, self-sacrifice and common purpose that under the Soviet system is induced by party discipline.

Otherwise, Khrushchev's prediction that our grandchildren will be Communists may well come true (though of course they would not call themselves Communists but true democrats), and one of the most cherished American illusions may finally be disproved—that good always triumphs over evil in the end.



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# Comfort and Fun:
## Morality in a Nice Society

DANIEL LERNER

THE LIVING GENERATION OF AMERICANS has quietly acquired a new human right—the right to be constantly entertained—which is conferred upon us by the mass media and underwritten by the business structure of radio, movies, picture magazines, digests, book clubs and, surpassing all others, television. This is a quiet right because it has not yet figured in any ideological manifestoes. The Atlantic Charter, the Four Freedoms, and the Declaration of the United Nations are all equally silent upon the right to be continuously entertained. But this does not impede the rapid spread of this particular right, which is quietly working the largest sort of transformation possible in the affairs of any society—by altering the levels of desire, the categories of contentment, and the criteria of judgment among its citizens.

Some of the symptoms of this transformation have been widely noted and just as widely attacked. Few among our intellectual spokesmen have many kind words to say for the mass media. Their impact, while widely discussed, is rarely studied, usually deplored and not too well understood. Juvenile delinquency has been attributed to movies and comics. Television, in its brief career, has already been found guilty of the New Illiteracy. A terribly stern justice has given public floggings to the "other-directed organization man in the gray flannel suit."

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This article is based on a paper presented at the Faculty Seminar of the Institute for Religious and Social Studies.



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But these summary judgments may be too hasty. They may relieve the anguish of those who respect the old austerities by overlooking the virtues that others find in the new conveniences. In reading the rash of morality plays about executives and suburbanites coinciding with the work of David Riesman, Erich Fromm, William Holly Whyte, I am reminded of the carol "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen!" There it is suggested that "to save us all from Satan's power" we must heed the "tidings of comfort and joy." Those who struggle so mightily with the diabolical mass media sometimes fail to notice their tidings of comfort and fun.

There is no room for dogma in such matters, but there is much room for inquiry. Is the "other-directed" man really the "other-respecting" man? Is the "organization man" really the "organized man"? There has been a change in America's psychic weather, no doubt, but perhaps the change is not so joyless as some suppose. What we need, paraphrasing Spinoza, is neither to weep nor to laugh—but to understand.

In the transformation of American morality, now well advanced, the mass media are both index and agent. Every facet of each person's and each family's daily round is touched in some way, and it is the whole "style of life" that needs study. An apt phrase that has been proposed is "fun morality." Under the dispensation of fun morality, the old key proposition about "being good" is transformed into "having a good time." There is little doubt that Americans today are more deferential than their ancestors were, or any other living people are, toward the virtues and values of having a good time.

This small shift in vocabulary represents a large shift in American practices and perspectives. Perhaps basic is the drive to transform the notion that ours is an "economy of abundance" from a fine phrase to an everyday reality. There is nothing new to American ideology in the high valuation placed upon widespread sharing of wealth. Jefferson based the stability of democratic society upon possession, by a substantial majority, of a real stake in its economic life. Herbert Hoover, or his aides, popularized the phrase "two chickens in every pot." The new thing is that this desire for a wide sharing of wealth has, in the present American generation, come



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closer to realization than ever before in history. There is only slight exaggeration in the propaganda put out by the New York Stock Exchange that we are a "nation of investors" and "every man a shareholder." Celebrating this state of affairs is the new direction that the American social conscience appears to have taken.

In the early days of the New Deal, America's social conscience was heavily preoccupied with the survival of "one third of the nation." Since that time, with employment and income running at all-time highs, the social conscience has shifted to assuring every man's *comfort*. The objective is to create conditions under which nearly all can be "haves"—and in which "have-nots" do not become an "internalized proletariat," as Toynbee claims to be the historic rule. The public welfare now is looked after by public and private organizations, and this requires organization men.

The theory that every man has a right to comfortable conditions of life is the economic counterpart of the theory that every man has the right to be continuously entertained. Comfort and fun go together. This leads to a quite different perspective than that which has governed most societies in the past. We appear to be, as a nation, committed to the lifeways of *non*adversity. The Spencerian gloss on the Darwinian doctrine has lost its claim to credence. We no longer believe that life needs to be a struggle in which only the fittest survive. On the contrary, we seem to have become convinced that life can be relatively pleasant for all and that all may survive at a rather high level of contentment.

This, right or wrong, is a revolutionary new idea in the world. It directs effort toward creating those conditions of life which enable people to "take things easy." The old puritan ethic (or perhaps, more exactly, simply "Protestant"), with its emphasis on effort, ambition, achievement, struggle and success, has yielded to a whole new array of words expressing the new conception of right conduct and the good life. The shift is from "getting on" to "getting along." The emphasis is on "being nice."

Naturally, the puritan ethic dies hard. For the past three centuries it governed conceptions of right conduct in much of the Western world—and particularly in those countries which made the greatest technological and industrial progress. It had come to



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seem, indeed, the only possible view of morality. To those of us still committed to an ethic of effort and achievement, the new "fun morality" seems a form of moral degeneracy. We are concerned about "conformism." We attack the "adjusted man" as a mere unthinking Babbitt. We inflict heavy verbal scars upon the "organization man," who represents a model of success other than that on which most of us were raised.

But the attack on fun morality is perhaps itself less thoughtful and less virtuous than we imagine. Associated with fun morality are many practices which those who don't love Lucy and disdain Elvis would *not* like to see abandoned. Would those who scorn "consumer mentality" also prefer less real consumption? It is quite possible that we cannot have our kind of society without some version of fun morality. I do not say that this *is* so. I say only that there are plausible reasons for thinking it may be so. The hypothesis merits more consideration than it has been given. The burden of responsibility for acquiring knowledge, not manufacturing stereotypes, falls most heavily on precisely those of us who suspect the symptoms of a popular culture without wishing to undermine a consumer's economy and a representative democracy.

2

How did this new American mixture come about? The crucial word in the dramatic transformation of American lifeways is "mobility." This nation of immigrants was founded upon the mobility of the individual. Such mobility became possible in the New World only when the Old World had achieved conditions of life which unbound men from their native heath. Once ordinary men found themselves free to move from their ancestral soil, they began to move in huge numbers from farms to flats and from fields to factories. As the physical means for transporting people improved, they began to move overseas in growing numbers. America was the goal of many millions. This bore little resemblance to the migrant or crusading hordes of earlier centuries, driven by war and famine. This was movement by individuals, each having made a personal choice to seek elsewhere his own version of a better life.



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Physical mobility of this type induced ideas of *social mobility* previously unknown in the Old World. Stirred by new desires, these new Americans voiced new demands. Each wanted his own stake in the new society and his own say in how it was to be organized. So there came to prevail in this country ideas of equal opportunity and democratic governance which would have been "unseemly" in the Old World. Perhaps no single institution so clearly expressed this new spirit as the victory of free public education for all who wanted it. This certified the idea that every man was entitled to a fair chance at winning for himself a good life by his own efforts and merits. Thus developed a new kind of participant society—a secular and rational society based on equal rights for each individual. Along with it, through the generations, developed a new style of personality.

A mobile society has to be rational, for the calculus of choice shapes individual behavior and conditions its rewards. People come to see social arrangements as manipulable rather than ordained, and to gauge their own prospects in terms of achievement rather than heritage. The test of merit is skill, not birth. Ways of thinking and acting are instruments of intention, not articles of faith; they succeed or fail by the test of what they accomplish, not what they worship. So whereas traditional men tended to reject innovation by saying "It has never been thus," modern Americans were more likely to ask only "Does it work?" and try the new way without further ado.

The psychic gap between these two postures is vast. It took long interweaving of ways of doing with ways of thinking before men could work out a style of living daily with change that *felt* consistent and seamless. Mobile society required a mobile personality, a self-system so adaptive to change that rearrangement is its permanent mode. It required the experience of psychic mobility through many generations to evolve participant institutions which, to ordinary men, felt "normal."

The mobile person shows a high capacity for identifying himself with new and strange aspects of the environment. He is capable of handling unfamiliar demands upon himself outside his habitual experience. The capacity for psychic mobility tends to enlarge a



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man's identity in two ways: *projection* facilitates identification by assigning to others certain preferred attributes of the self (others are "incorporated" because they are "like me"); *introjection* enlarges identity by attributing to the self certain desirable attributes of the object (others are incorporated because "I" am like them, or would like to be like them). We use the term "empathy" as shorthand for these techniques of enlarging a man's "self-system." In ordinary parlance, empathy is the capacity to see oneself in the other fellow's situation. This capacity leads us to put a high value on negotiation, mediation, compromise—on "getting along."

Empathy is the psychic instrument which enables newly mobile persons to act effectively in the world we live in. This is why the mobile personality is not to be regarded as mere psychic aberration or moral degeneration, but as a social phenomenon with a history. Our concern must be with the large historical movement (which started in the West and is now becoming apparent elsewhere)—a movement in which a strong capacity for empathy is the distinctive psychic component. And it is useful to study the way in which the person who possesses this quality to a high degree tends to become also the cash customer, the radio listener, the voter and the "nice person."

This emphasis upon empathy is dominant only in modern society—which is distinctively industrial, urban, literate and participant. (A society is participant if most people in it go through school, read newspapers, receive cash payments in jobs they are free to change, buy goods in a free market, vote in free elections, and express opinions on many matters which are not their business.) Any society develops a predominant personal style which people find most appropriate for daily life; the "style" of modern society is distinctive for its capacity to rearrange the "self-system" on short notice.

This is the style partially characterized by David Riesman as "other-directed." But the term "other-direction" has acquired, among our self-abnegating intelligentsia, a negative moral charge. The term "empathy" more nearly does justice to the elements of skill and the positive social functions of other-direction. Empathy enables people to respond efficiently to strange and varied stimuli;



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in so doing it enlarges the self-system of ordinary people. By enabling them to "see" the other fellow's situation more readily, empathy provides the psychological underpinning for the participant lifeways of modern society. The latent statistical assertion involved here is this: in modern society *more* individuals exhibit a *high* empathic capacity than in any previous society. In brief, there has been a *net increase in human imaginativeness,* as construed, in modern society (whether the society be favorably interpreted as "participant," or unfavorably as "conformist").

3

To identify psychic mobility with the proposition that there has been an increase in empathy—that more people now command a greater skill at imagining themselves in strange situations than did people in any previous historical epoch—is to assign a large function to popular culture, notably elementary education and mass media. The technical history of the popular arts illuminates their function as an empathy multiplier. A generation before Columbus sailed to the New World, Gutenberg set up his printing press. Press, radio, film and television today climax the evolution thus set into motion. The mass media opened to mankind the infinite *vicarious* universe. Many more millions of persons in the world were to be affected directly, and perhaps more profoundly, by the communication media than by the transportation agencies. For the vicarious universe not only involves more people; it involves them in a different order of psychic experience.

Vicarious experience requires other skills and stimulates other psychic mechanisms from those used in travel. Travel involves direct personal exposure to a complex natural environment, whereas mediated experience explores mainly the simplified settings contrived by those who have prepared the "experience." Thus, while the traveler is apt to become bewildered by the profusion of strange sights and sounds, the radio listener or movie viewer is likely to be enjoying a composed and orchestrated version of some new reality. He has the benefit of more facile perception of the new experience as a "whole," with the concomitant advantage (which is sometimes illusory) of facile comprehension.



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On the other hand, the reader-listener-viewer loses the traveler's pragmatic advantage of being physically present in the strange environment, of having to make responsive action toward the stimuli it presents. The passive receiver of mediated communications finds his response to new stimuli necessarily confined to his own interior. Thus, while the stimuli he receives are usually less complex, the demands of exclusively interior response are often much more strenuous. The inhibition of overt response is a learned behavior and a difficult one. It was common, in the early days of movies, for persons strained beyond endurance to throw themselves or some objects at the screen to stop the villain from strangling the heroine. Even our sophisticated youngsters today will sometimes, at an agonizing moment in the television show, hide their faces.

The point is that mediated experience simplifies *perception* (what we "see") while greatly complicating *response* (what we "do"). In this way the media have helped to shape the modern, highly responsive self-system, ready to rearrange itself on short notice from a variety of cues. As history's great teacher of the skills of empathy, the mass media have multiplied psychic mobility among men in the West. (This is not to be construed as genial endorsement of current media operations, which too often tend to routinize, not stimulate, imagination.)

This capacity to empathize, to see ourselves in the other fellow's situation, is essential to our "nice person" morality. Its spread has made America a society in which most people can "take things easy" —can make it a rule of life to "get along with everybody." It underlies the national distrust of odd-balls, eight-balls and screwballs. It has made "puritanism" a pejorative word and "straitlaced" not less so. It leads to suspicion of a person who is "too ambitious," who "tries too hard" to overcome an obstacle instead of simply "sweating it out." The course of life in a nice society is "give and take"; the rule is "live and let live."

Popular attitudes of this sort can be painful for intellectuals and others who still live by (or at least believe they do) the old puritan ethic as compared with, in Holly Whyte's phrase, a "social ethic." But it may well be that the older ethic is obsolescent, not merely because the newer morality is more comfortable for most people



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but, possibly, because it is genuinely superior as a guide to life in an abundant society. Some clues to the newness of American lifeways are furnished by the attitudes toward America expressed in other countries. There is, for example, the attack launched from the highly "sophisticated" culture of contemporary France.

4

Because American intellectuals have borrowed ideas from France over the past three centuries, they have seen no reason to change their ways during the past three decades. Many postwar slogans deprecating American conformism and vulgarity have spread from France over much of the world, and even into our own country. These slogans have been more repeated than scrutinized. For some years there was much talk about American "bathtub culture"; but this left wide open the question of whether greater morality necessarily attaches to a population with a significantly higher proportion of microbes. There was also a period of talk about "Coca-Cola culture"; but this did not explore the question of whether a people is more virtuous because even more heavily alcoholic than we are. It is not without interest that Coca-Cola, in fact, spread rapidly through France, as all over the world, and remains, so far as I know, the only drink which can be bought by people almost anywhere for the equivalent of a nickel (except, of course, in the heavily protected French beverage market).

Much of this fancy talk about American vulgarization of taste and standardization of mind stems from a potent distrust, among French intellectuals, of our extraordinarily developed "popular culture." The fear of the mass media seems to me a *class* attitude of the least admirable variety. In its simplest form, this may be only the fear of technological unemployment: the mass media require skills quite different from those usually found among the traditional intelligentsia. On a somewhat more complex level, the French intelligentsia defends certain standards constructed largely by itself over past centuries and attacks everything which appears to threaten the institutional arrangements by which those standards are maintained. These standards express traditional and class aesthetic preferences, but often they parade as ethical judgments and



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are delivered in a high moral tone. A fine case study could be made of the "TV snob," usually a person with some pretentions to intellectuality, and nowhere more numerous than among the French intelligentsia. It is not irrelevant that artistic life in France has failed to flourish under the continued prevalence of this attitude. I refer here not only to the failure of the French intelligentsia to develop new creative lines in the modern arts of the mass media, but even the drying up of the old French creative spirit in the traditional arts.

This is not to be construed as a counterattack on French anti-Americanism. My own Francophilia lies too deep to be uprooted by the current show of petulance among a people who gave our modern world its great Cartesian myth of rationality. It is no easy thing to "speak for" a great power which has been diminished, a lovely culture which has been bypassed; and French intellectuals today have a tough assignment. But one who shares their heritage has a right to expect, a duty to demand, better of them than the defensive negativism they have been producing. In any case, the slogans created and diffused by an ambivalent intelligentsia ought to be scrutinized and evaluated before they are merely repeated by Americans. For there is a point underlying French petulance that goes deeper than French—or American—parochialism. It is a point on which may turn the future of Western civilization.

5

The great dialogue of the Western tradition has been "the dialogue of Self with Self"—in a word, conscience. If it is agreed that the dialogue has taken a new turn in modern times, has become a "dialogue of Self with Others," what does this mean for the future of Western civilization? Can *social* conscience—responsibility to others—adequately perform the functions historically assigned to individual conscience, which was responsible only to God or to the God-within-oneself?

The question is too important for a glib solution. It is all too easy to settle such problems by facile, derogatory references to hell fixation or stargazing. There are many people, less concerned with



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damnation or salvation than with the prospects for a decent future on this earth, who want reasonable answers, not easy quips.

The question has been posed, but even the few serious efforts to deal with it base their judgment on untested assumptions. It is not at all clear that Riesman's "other-directed" man is incapable of "autonomy" (as Riesman himself, if not his acolytes, has pointed out). It is even less clear why Whyte's "organization man" should not be taken as a highly moral man in a new sense—as an approximation of a model for the rational fusion of individual with social conscience. Of the treatises by Sloan Wilson, Vance Packard and A. C. Spectorsky, one must say that suburbia merits better than clever travesties lacking wit or insight.

Suburbia is, in parochial terms, the fulfillment of the American Dream for the full range of "middle" classes of our society. Its concern with nice houses and cars, with the competition between school and TV for the education of its children, with community relations and civic activities—all these occur on a quasi-educated level of discourse that makes an easy mark for the American intelligentsia. But American suburbia, in global terms, may be the functional equivalent of what most peoples of the world seem, nowadays, to want. For suburbia may be the highest reach of civilized life that has yet been represented as within the grasp of common humanity.

A few years ago I visited a walled village of Iran, whose daily life-ways antedate the Christian era. There, among peasants in rags, a uniquely enterprising soul had just returned from the distant market town, where he had sold his crop for cash. Overstimulated by the sight of a city, he had spent his first cash on a battery radio, baubles for his wife, a ready-made suit for himself (the first in his village), and a calendar for their mud hut. The calendar now decorating their wall (it had been reproduced by a Tehran bank) portrayed the American Family—Dad, Mom, Junior and Sister—on the lawn in front of their ranch house with a station wagon parked in the driveway. O bright dream of suburbia!

*Item*: In suburbia *everybody has cash—or credit*! Decisions as to the desirable ratio to be maintained between cash and credit elicit real ingenuity in family conclaves. In traditional society there is no cash; in "modern" France there is no credit; in "modern"



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Russia there is no choice. Only in America is the great dialogue between present pleasure and future felicity thrown open for discussion and decision by the generality of individuals and families. "You pays your money and you takes your choice"—there resonates, in uncultivated but understandable tones, the American music of humanity.

*Item*: In suburbia *everybody has opinions*! As a student of the Middle East, I first learned what a giant step this was from the stoic, isolate silence of the constricted peasant in traditional society. Only in the lowest reaches of America's slums is there still any question as to whether people ought to have opinions. In the climactic scene of *Sweet Thursday*, John Steinbeck relates how the madam of a whorehouse prepares one of her hustlers, not really made for the business, to go out into the world of respectability. The first rule is to keep her mouth shut:

> Next thing is opinions. You and me is always busting out with opinions. Hell, Suzy, we ain't got no opinions! We just say stuff we heard or seen in the movies. We're scared we'll miss something, like running for a bus. That's the second rule: lay off opinions because you ain't really got any.

But in suburbia everybody has opinions, however acquired, and his right to them is beyond challenge. As a social psychologist somewhat wearied by the theories of my trade, I have sat through hours of P.T.A. meetings, bemused by the easy familiarity of my neighbors with the views of Doctors Spock, Gesell, Dewey and Freud. It is not necessary to be impressed by the technical skill displayed in handling these ideas in order to be overwhelmed by their extraordinary diffusion among a population which, not so many years ago, got their ideas on these matters mainly from Mother.

If all this sounds too much like a paean, I want to make it clear that the praise is for what freedom has accomplished in America until now. What may follow is another matter. Arnold Toynbee assures us that the passing of the Judaeo-Christian tradition spells the end of the West. That admirable Jesuit Father La Farge suggests that the new secularized dialogue of Self with Others can only sustain an "afterglow" of the scintillant Western epoch. But how do they know? Toynbee, by a series of brilliantly executed tautolo-



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gies which mainly recapitulate his own characterological preferences; Father La Farge, with his broader tolerance, by his wish that humanity shall not sin against itself. These are fine, decent, intelligent men. So are David Riesman and Holly Whyte. They care for men and worry for their humanity. But I am not sure that any of them has knowledge surpassing his own anxieties.

Nor have I. My exhortation is no counsel of unbounded optimism. But it does advise against selling short, in a time of crisis, the good portfolio of stocks that we hold. I think we can weather the storm of a clamorous world population wanting our dividends while they do not share our calculations, risks, investments. I think we can do so by sharing our dividends with others while they learn how to calculate risks, by sharing our know-how about getting on while getting along. I think that man's responsibility to others may produce a superior civilization even to that which evolved under the aegis of man's responsibility to himself—that reshaping the great dialogue as Self with Others can have a happy outcome for common humanity. I think that the mass media may be the principal instrument whereby men around the world can swiftly acquire the human skills needed to cope with their accelerating hopes and dreams. I think; but who, as yet, knows?



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# *Three Translations from Rainer Maria Rilke*

RANDALL JARRELL

## *Lament*

All is far
And long gone by.
I believe the star
That shines up there
Has been dead for a thousand years.
I believe, in the car
I heard go by,
Something terrible was said.
In the house a clock
Is striking . . . .
In what house?
I would like to walk
Out of my heart, under the great sky.
I would like to pray.
And surely, of all the stars,
One still must be.
I believe I know
Which one endures;
Which one, at the end of its beam in the sky,
Stands like a white city.



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## *Death*

There stands Death, a bluish liquid
In a cup without a saucer.
An odd place for a cup:
Stands on the back of a hand. And one can see
Quite plainly, there on the glassy slope,
The place where the handle broke off. Dusty. And: HOPE
On the side in used-up letters.

The drinker that drank the drink
Read it out, long, long ago, at breakfast.

This Being of theirs!
To get rid of them you have to poison them?

Except for that, they'd stay? They munch away
At their own frustration so insatiably?
One has to pull the Present from their mouths,
The hard Present, like a dental-plate.

Then they mumble. Mumble, mumble . . .
. . . . . .
Star
Seen from a bridge once: O falling star,
Not to forget you. Stand!



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# *The Great Night*

Often I looked at you—stood at the window I had started
The day before, stood and looked at you. The new city still
Seemed something forbidden; the landscape, not yet won over,
Darkened as though I was not. The closest things
Didn't bother to make me understand. The street
Crowded itself up to the lamppost: I saw that it was strange.
Out there a room was clear in lamplight
—Already I was part; they sensed it, closed the shutters.
I stood there. And then a child cried. And I knew
The mothers in the houses, what they were; knew, suddenly,
The spring of all our tears, the spring that is never dry.
Or a voice sang, and went a little beyond
Whatever I had expected; or an old man coughed,
Full of reproach, as though his flesh were in the right
Against the gentler world. Then a clock struck the hour—
But I counted too late, and it got by me.
As a boy, a stranger, when at last they let him,
Can't catch the ball, and doesn't know any of the games
The others are playing together so easily,
So that he stands and looks off, where?—I stand, and suddenly
See that *you* have made friends with me, played with me, grown-up
Night, and I look at you. While the towers
Were angered, while with averted fates
A city encompassed me, and the unguessable hills
Were encamped against me, and in closing circles
Strangeness hungered round the chance-set flares
Of my senses: then was it, O highest,
That you felt it no shame to know me, that your breath
Went over me, that there passed into me
Your grave and from far apportioning smile.

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# Germany's New Flagellants

ALFRED WERNER

A NOT UNCOMMON SIGHT IN THE MIDDLE AGES was that of half-naked flagellants, strolling the streets in double file, reciting prayers, and scourging themselves with leathern thongs until the blood ran. This ferocious manner of doing penance for sins did not originate in Germany, but it was there developed with mystic fervor into a fine art. To quote from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*:

> As soon . . . as the Flagellant movement crossed the Alps into Teutonic countries, its whole nature changed. The idea was welcomed with enthusiasm: a ceremonial was rapidly developed, and almost as rapidly a specialized doctrine. . . . The Flagellants became an organized sect, with severe discipline and extravagant claims.

If generalizations are permissible, it might be suggested that no nation is so susceptible to mystic ideas as the German, and that no other can so channelize romantic enthusiasm into a rigid system. The German anti-Semitism of the Hitler period, while influenced by political and economic motives, was predominantly of a hysterical nature, as can best be gathered from Hitler's maniacal foamings. Goebbels, Rosenberg and other party intellectuals provided this pseudo religion with a "ceremonial" and a "specialized doctrine." Like the fifteenth-century Flagellants under the dictatorship of Konrad Schmidt, the German anti-Semites under Hitler became "an organized sect, with severe discipline and extravagant claims," with the slight difference that instead of scourging their own bodies, they beat the Jews, upon whom the sins of the world could conveniently be blamed.

In the Germany of 1956 and 1957, flagellantism has reappeared, although it is now devoid of its abhorrent physical manifestations. To superficial observers it may appear to be an awkward sort of

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philo-Semitism, but to see it as such and nothing else would amount to neglecting its strong hysterical or, if you prefer, romantic undercurrent. The new flagellantism is not yet a mass movement, and it is, perhaps, waiting for a Konrad Schmidt to whip up a nationwide frenzy; but even at this initial stage certain features—some reassuring, many frightening—can be noted.

It would be oversimplifying to say that the puzzling phenomenon of German philo-Semitism came like a sudden if benevolent cloudburst exactly a dozen years after the closing of the concentration camps. Even the Nazi terror was unable to silence all voices of humanity. Between 1933 and 1945, thousands of Germans came to the aid of persecuted Jews—although there were millions who would not move a finger for them, even when the Gestapo was not looking. There were even a few noble men who performed what they considered their duty as Christians and as human beings, whether or not the Gestapo was watching. For having given active help to "non-Aryans," both the Protestant pastor Maas and the Catholic prelate Lichtenberg were jailed, and the latter did not live to see the day of liberation. After the end of nazism, quite a few German statesmen, philosophers, journalists and clergymen felt free to warn their people that they must atone for crimes against the Jews committed, if not by the nation itself, certainly in the name of the German nation.

But it was only in 1956 that thousands rather than scores of Germans (for the most part, in the Western democratic sector) felt an urge for expiation that sometimes was to manifest itself in slightly absurd reactions. One might say that all of it started with a play—not with a literary masterwork like Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, but the German adaptation of the drama fashioned for the American stage by Frances Goodrich and Arthur Hackett from the English translation of Anne Frank's diary. Lessing's theme—that religion was a matter of feeling rather than dogma, and that a love of God and good was more important than subscription to any given creed, Christian, Jewish or Mohammedan—was greeted with demonstrative applause in postwar German theaters. But the play's complicated "comedy of confusion" plot and its eighteenth-century blank verse prevented it from reaching the innermost recesses of the spec-



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tator's soul. Yet this is exactly what the *Tagebuch der Anne Frank* did; it broke through the tough shell that the German had grown around his soul. In what may be a natural drive for self-preservation, he had pushed all of the Nazi period into the remote corners of the subconscious mind. The victims who had lived through the Nazi era, or at least part of it, and visited Germany after 1945 knew all the time that this "amnesia" of the Germans was only defense. But they also feared that this repression of a reality too painful to remember might eventually lead to an obliteration, to the myth that nothing had really happened between 1933 and 1945.

As far back as 1784 (only a few years after the first presentation of Lessing's *Nathan*) Schiller, in a speech on the theater as a moral institution, had pointed out the function of the theater as an instrument of enlightenment, and the effect of the drama in helping to achieve a balance of mind: "The unhappy man weeps away his own sorrow with that of others, the happy man becomes thoughtful, he who fancies himself secure becomes anxious." Schiller went on to say:

> When grief gnaws at the heart, when depression poisons our lonely hours, when the world and our affairs nauseate us, when a thousand burdens press upon our souls and the cares of our callings threaten to stifle our sensitivity, then, in such moods, the stage receives us: in this artificial world we dream the real one away. . . .

But to the German reviewers of 1956 the *Tagebuch* meant something different; it meant a much delayed rendezvous with fate. As the critic of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* put it:

> This is no drama in the old sense. It belongs to the Passions of Christ, brought nearer to us step by step. Judging this play is beyond the capabilities of a German theater critic. . . . Old wounds are broken open. The memory of shame and terror makes it almost impossible to subject this play to aesthetic rules of dramatic judgment, however broad they may be. . . . Those who should feel guilty should feel it here most of all.

The *Tagebuch* was performed in almost all West German cities, running in some theaters for several months, and in a few East German cities as well. But in all places the packed auditoriums were frozen in silence when the curtain came down. Here and there



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the programs requested "No applause"; but this was not necessary, for the rare outbreaks of applause were hissed down immediately. Silently the crowds filed out, as though leaving a funeral; and the play became a symbol of murder protracted, not only of Anne and her relatives and friends, but of six million Jewish civilians and, indeed, of additional millions of Russians, Poles, French, Dutch and others.

That television, radio and the press devoted much time and space to the fate of Anne Frank and her coreligionists, that teachers marched their classes to see the play, that during a few months the *Tagebuch* (the translation of the original Dutch text) topped all other best sellers—all these were wholesome phenomena. In fact, the spontaneous reception of book and play proved to the world what should have required no proof: nazism had not succeeded in poisoning the core of the German nation, and there was much hope for the youth!

A note of discord in this sweet harmony was sounded: some German voices were raised to protest that the play, in the last analysis, might have done more harm than good, that it was letting Germans off too lightly and did not even begin to suggest how frightful were the German actions. Other opinions paralleled those of Schiller, who minimized the direct moral effect of a play in either the cure of vice or the prevention of crime. And they wondered whether the spectator, having sat through the play, might not consider himself cleansed of any guilt for the price of a ticket—a small sacrifice to obtain freedom from the burden of the sin, without requiring (as does the church) an inward change on the sinner's part.

Skeptics have even criticized what to many observers seemed the most heartening episode in the history of the Bonn Republic: the pilgrimage of more than two thousand young Hamburgers, in March of 1957, to the site of the erstwhile concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen. "A ceremonial was rapidly developed," we read in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* concerning the Flagellants. Isn't there a danger in the crass externalization of feelings that should be permitted to grow undisturbed and unseen within, like a well-tended monastery garden? Once the heart is turned into a public park,



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grass and flowers may be trampled upon, and the holiness of the spot dissipated.

Americans saw on television what occurred March 17 at Bergen-Belsen, that vast cemetery where lie buried, in some unknown spot, the remains of Anne Frank. The youngsters traveled in trains, buses, on bicycles, through the chilling rain to the low hilltop upon which a huge obelisk, a few gravestones and, of course, the burial mounds, serve to remind the visitor of the past tragedy. Of the speeches made by young men and women, spellbound by Anne Frank, one came from an ex-Nazi, Hans Hanoch Nissen:

> He who is speaking to you now is a former member of the Hitler Youth. When, after the war, I learned of what had occurred, the feeling of shame drove me to make up, with my weak powers, for what had been done to the Jews. My homeland is now Israel. I have become a Jew, and I am helping my Jewish brethren to rebuild their land. Yet it was a great and comforting experience for me to see here the new German generation. I am united with you in the belief in a better future, and I am greeting you herewith with the beautiful greeting of my new homeland, Shalom—Peace!

*Wie die Alten sungen, so zwitschern die Jungen.* In postwar Germany, however, it is hard to tell whether the initiative for the new philo-Semitism originated with the young and created pressure upon the older generation, or whether the young took their cues from their grandfathers, the old, confirmed liberals, of whom that scholarly man, President Heuss, is a shining example. Their fathers do not count as guides, for it was they who, by voting for Hitler in 1930, made the Nazi party the second largest group in the Weimar Republic's parliament; it was they who contributed to the Nazi party treasure and, in return, reaped profits from Nazi "law" through the wanton confiscation of Jewish-owned shops and plants, the replacement of "non-Aryan" journalists, educators, scientists by "Aryans," and so forth.

Charges like these hurled against their elders obviously are not always and not entirely justifiable. But that this is the prevailing mood can be learned from the writings of the young or from talks with German students. History repeats itself in a curious way: just



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as in 1930 the college student was the spearhead and carrier of "idealistic" anti-Semitism, trying to make his unwilling elders see the light, so in 1957 youth is the protagonist of the new philo-Semitism. It is significant that German students were among the first to demonstrate publicly against the rehabilitation of movie director Veit Harlan, producer of the notorious propaganda film *Jud Suess,* which was designed to arouse violent anti-Jewish feelings both in Germany and in the Nazi-occupied countries. When Martin Buber came all the way from Israel to Hamburg to receive the Goethe Prize, he was idolized by the youth. His books, despite their difficult subject matter and style, are widely read. Suddenly a demand has developed for volumes on Jewish history, Israel, the pogroms, and what Nietzsche called the "anti-Semitic swindle." Talks by Jewish lecturers, often German Jews who have revisited the places they had been forced to leave, are well attended, and I have frequently heard young Germans express the desire to see Israel.

Were it not for this concomitant desire for knowledge, for real facts, one might very well regard the present upsurge with alarm. In the eighteenth century the "ideal" Jew was created by writers with noble sentiments: the Marquis d'Argens in France, Richard Cumberland in England, Christian Fürchtegott Gellert in Germany. This Jew had as little in common with the real, everyday Jew as had the sinister figure concocted by Nazi propagandists or the gentle, pure, bloodless being in the mind of many who made the pilgrimage to Bergen-Belsen.

Can't the Jew be just a human being and nothing else? In many countries he can—but not, apparently, in Germany, where there is the tendency to romanticize him, to see in him either the horrible *Ewige Jude* (the legend of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, originated in Central Europe) or a magician of the superior kind, from the fictitious Nathan the Wise to the living Martin Buber the Wise. Around 1800, sophisticated Germans considered it a privilege to be invited to the salons dominated by informed and clever Berlin Jews. In the 1950's, a Berlin hostess is anxious to present to her guests at least one Jewish intellectual. Lessing, son and grandson of pastors, complained in an essay about the shameful oppression of a people that had produced so many prophets and



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heroes, a people that "no Christian can regard without reverence." In the 1950's, German theologians are revising the common idea of the Jews as Christ-killers by insisting that God commanded the Jews to deny Christ so that, instead of remaining merely a Jewish national messiah, he would become the savior of the world. Contrary to tradition (and in marked contrast, by the way, to Toynbee's "fossil" theory) they maintain that there is a special holy meaning in Jewish existence, that Jews must strengthen their Judaism and retain their characteristics because Judaism, far from being an anachronism, has a very special function in God's plan for the salvation of the world!

Visiting Western Germany, Emanuel Litwinoff, a young English-Jewish poet, wrote: "To be a Jew in Berlin is like belonging to a rare and prized species of fauna." A German hostess declared, naïvely, how wonderful it was to have the "salt of the earth" at her table. But Litwinoff found something uncanny in the Germans' excessive anxiety to be nice to the few remaining Jews. One suspects in this phenomenon of sudden, exaggerated pro-Jewishness (that manifested itself also in a definite pro-Israel stand during the latest Arab-Jewish war, despite all Arab wooings) a largely unconscious maneuver to avoid the deep soul-searching, the genuine moral stocktaking for which no *Tagebuch der Anne Frank* performances, no pilgrimages to concentration camp sites can be substitutes. The medieval church leaders were against the Flagellants because their way of doing penance failed to probe into the depths of the soul. Modern observers, German or otherwise, fear that the new emotion-charged flagellantism among the Germans may steer them away from a true understanding of the past that can be gained only by a forthright facing of the truth. It is one thing to find "catharsis" in the theater, and quite a different thing to admit, "Yes, I am guilty," and to go on living with this feeling of guilt. For at least ten years Germans tried to keep busy and pretend that nothing had happened, and this device did not work. The switch to another method was, of course, not created by the play about Anne Frank. The play simply arrived at the psychological moment and filled the gap when the amnesia policy appeared to be bankrupt.

But it is doubtful whether the new, hysterical approach will



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yield better results. Guilt feelings, artificially banished from consciousness for years, cannot be resolved by theater parties or torchlight processions. How the tension between ego and superego can be rid of its man-killing dangerousness has been shown by Germany's most famous psychiatrist, Karl Jaspers, a full decade before the staging of the *Tagebuch*. But how many Germans, especially among the young, have read *Die Schuldfrage: Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Frage*?

From Kierkegaard, Jaspers has adopted the doctrine that eternity is more important than time, that sin is worse than suffering. Like his spiritual ancestor, Jaspers sought to evoke in his readers a passion for truth, by which alone the human situation can be met. The professor did not expect to convince the die-hard Nazis, of whom there must still be millions. He addressed himself, instead, to the much larger number of those inclined to think that the German nation had already been redeemed through the hangings of a few top criminals at Nuremberg. This, he held, was a dangerous delusion.

He knew that quite a few Germans were willing to admit the culpability of those Nazis who actually committed murders and other crimes, but that was as far as their contrition would go. Yet Dr. Jaspers maintained that *all* Germans were tainted with political guilt; that *all* Germans were morally guilty, including those who persuaded themselves that they joined the party for "lofty" reasons, and those countless fellow travelers who might have effectively resisted the Nazi regime had it not been for their sluggishness of heart; that, finally, in a metaphysical sense, *all* Germans, even the anti-Nazi like himself, were guilty because they survived the mass murders of civilians. The Divine Power, Jaspers maintained, may find you guilty because you did not act to prevent a crime, because you continued to live at a time when your neighbor was being murdered.

Jaspers' reasoning was picked up by another septuagenarian, similar to him in staunch liberalism and rejection of all nazism stood for—the venerable Theodor Heuss. But Bonn's president did not entirely agree with the psychiatrist. He rejected the idea of collective guilt, for to accept it would amount to perpetuating the



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Nazi horror of laying a curse on a whole people. Perhaps the substitute he suggested might be acceptable to all brave and steadfast enough to live with responsibility: If nazism's deeds were not performed by the nation, they were, at least, performed in its name; hence, the German nation cannot but experience collective shame.

To the generation of Jaspers also belongs Max Picard who, like him, is both physician and philosopher. In *Hitler In Uns Selbst* he went even further than his colleague. All of us, Dr. Picard declares, Gentile and Jew, black and white, European and American, carry some sort of Hitler in ourselves, an inherent sickness of the soul which may grow into a dangerous cancer unless we cure it in time.

Hitler, Picard insists, was far more than just an economic or a political phenomenon: he was an inevitable product of the inner chaos of modern man, of the disordered state of Western civilization. Nazism broke out in Germany because "there had concentrated all the disjointedness, the dissolute, the evil, just as disease concentrated in one bodily organ to form a clear picture there." Nazi Germany forcibly tried to expand in space because she was incapable of expanding into permanence and stillness—or, one might say, because she had lost the garden of her soul.

After being rid of Hitler, the Satan with a nondescript face, the man without reality, the expression of total nothingness, Germany now has to realize that it is her mission to fight, not against the world, but against her own disjointedness. She must remember that although other nations contributed in various degrees to the rise of Hitlerism, it was in the Reich that the counterworld of unreality—that is to say, of a man-made and not God-made reality—first became real.

We do not know how many of the youngsters who visited Bergen-Belsen read these authors. Their teachers certainly should read them to be able to channel sincere feelings and deep-seated desires in the right direction. For it is not enough to identify oneself with Anne Frank, that *agnus dei qui tollit peccata mundi*. There is a danger of equating the sorrows of little Anne, who suffered in an Amsterdam garret, with the anxiety of a German boy or girl, who heard from an air raid shelter the Allied bombs crash on the city. The difference is that Anne Frank eventually perished in Bergen-



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Belsen and still did not consider herself a martyr. Young though she was, she was clear in her thinking. And if in Germany this sort of clarity should prevail over romantic emotion, insight over idolatry, there is good hope that German anti-Semitism, as well as all that goes with it, will be swept away by the long-overdue marriage of romance to reason. Germany has never lacked tornadoes of emotion. What she has often lacked is the kind of common sense that has guided many other nations safely through difficult times. Yet this common sense can be noted in many a manifestation of modern German youth. Perhaps it is not in the letter written by a sixteen-year-old participant in the Bergen-Belsen pilgrimage, a letter published in newspapers in all parts of the Bonn Republic:

> I have sworn that we must do better! All must be made to realize that the highest and the most beautiful being is man—regardless of whether he is a Jew, a Dane, a Russian, an Englishman, a Frenchman, or a German. It does not matter, for they are all men.
>
> Ann, you did not die in vain. We, today's youth, want to believe in what is good in man—like you did . . . we shall never forget you and all those innocent people who had to die like you. We do not want to forget, and we must never forget.

The feelings are genuine, but the dangerous characteristic of feelings not tempered with reason is that they can be swayed so easily. Wisdom comes with maturity. But Anne Frank would not agree with us: "Oh, those stupid grownups, they'd do better to start learning themselves, before they have so much to say to the younger generation!"

## *Comment on "Germany's New Flagellants"*

MARGARET MEAD

Alfred Werner's paper raises in an acute form the problem of the definition of the German people's attitude toward individual and collective responsibility. The peculiar circumstances of Hitler's rise to power, the extraordinarily deep involvement of the entire world through the treatment of the Jews, and the struggle



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which the victorious Western powers made to establish a new level of international criminal law at Nuremberg, have all meant that the Germans were not left to themselves to come to terms with their own past style of behavior. Germany has been denied the purging qualities of thoroughgoing upheavals such as those which shook her opponents, and, at the end of World War II, was denied a chance to settle her own moral scores within her own boundaries.

Within Germany we have witnessed pendulum swings in feeling, as guilt was assumed or repudiated; as the Nazis who at first received heavy sentences were pardoned; as West Berlin erected into a deed of incomparable self-congratulatory heroism the struggle against the blockade in which innocent German babies died to save the free world; as West Berliners have lamented the arrested holocaust which the Russians have made of the ruins of old Berlin; as youth groups form about the memory of Anne Frank, or a special memorial synagogue is built in Berlin. When the feeling shifts toward the assumption of guilt, toward a position such that children who were babes in arms when the enormities of Dachau and Belsen were perpetrated seek to wipe out the sins that were not theirs, the rest of the world applauds. People worry a little, as Alfred Werner does, lest such an orgy of guilt should be self-liquidating, lest the German people should have a catharsis and lose their guilt! For then they might return to their former state of blocking out both knowledge and admitted responsibility. But essentially, commentators outside Germany have placed themselves in the anomalous and inconsistent position of applauding one-half of German traditional behavior and rejecting the other, somehow refusing to recognize that the two are linked.

The whole world has suffered from a peculiarity of German culture which fosters a character structure in which the individual takes corporate responsibility only for obedience to the representatives of the corporate state and not for the content of the commands which are obeyed. This seems to be related to the German feeling

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that one only acts as a completely whole, absolutely responsible and moral being when one acts not as a member of a group, a class, a corps, a cadre, but all alone. The "amnesia," which has been so copiously commented upon, can be seen as the repudiation by the whole self of any act of the part self, i.e. the member of a collective, acting as an obedient and therefore nonresponsible member of that collective. "I did not know" then becomes a way of saying, "It was not I who performed this deed"; and, "*Now* I know" can be said when the person steps out of the collective to become an individual whole again.

This type of morality contrasts strongly with the Anglo-Saxon demand that an individual accept responsibility for acts which he is commanded to do, because it is his duty to refuse to commit an act which he believes to be wrong. Within the Anglo-American code, the soldier commanded to commit an outrage should risk court-martial and execution rather than obey. (This ideal is, of course, not often achieved, but it is the ideal.)

Throughout World War II and in our subsequent political thinking, we have realized that the German type of unquestioning obedience and blocking out of awareness of the terrible things done in the name of the German state was very dangerous for the world. But instead of taking public attitudes which might elicit from thinking Germans a change in this ethic, we continually reinforce one-half of the ethic and approve of their showing collective retrospective guilt or shame, even as we worry—from experience—whether the expression will not go too far and fling them back again.

Meanwhile the real problem is to help—to the extent that outside critics and commentators can ever help a people rephrase their national image—the young Germans of today, who, by our definitions of responsibility, have no need to feel guilty over what their forebears did, to find a way of rehabilitating the national image without involving themselves in an orgy of cathartic, self-defeating, collective self-reproach. If a shift could be made from the mythology of the guilt of a people or the shame of a nation to the reality of the contemporary reputation of a nation, then those who care about that reputation could go to work to use the past as a lesson



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in what not to do in the present and future. They could lift themselves to new constructive goals, to a desire to make the *name of Germany* outstanding for responsible care for all of the peoples of the world. Freed from the demand that they continue to manifest collective—and so, to the individual, irresponsible—behavior, they would be free to develop individual, full political responsibility.

It is useful to compare the curtain speeches of *The Diary of Anne Frank,* as played in New York:

Anne's Voice: In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.
Mr. Frank closes Diary.
Mr. Frank: She puts me to shame.
They are silent.
Slow Curtain.

and *Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank,* as played in Germany:

Annes Stimme: Trotz allem glaube ich noch an das Gute im Menschen.
Herr Frank schliesst langsam das Tagebuch.
Herr Frank: Wie sie mich beschämt.
Schweigen.
Der Vorhang fällt.

There is a world of difference between believing that man is good at heart, and that there is good in man—which co-exists with evil.

* * *

This comment is based on work on German culture at a distance: World War II (cf. "Round Table, Germany after the War," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry,* XV:3:1945, pp. 381-441), for the Preparatory Commission for the First International Congress on Mental Health, 1947-1948 (cf. "The Problem of German Authoritarianism and Aggression" and "Regularities in German Character Structure Which Are Particularly Relevant to Political Behavior," by Margaret Mead, mimeographed reports based on papers and reports by various authors), for American Museum of Natural History Studies in Contemporary Cultures-B, 1952-1953; and on experience of East and West Berlin, 1956. For bibliography, cf. M. Mead and R. Métraux, eds., *The Study of Culture at a Distance,* University of Chicago Press, 1953.



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# *Concerning Weather*

HOLLIS SUMMERS

The softest day of Spring is Spring
When our concern is only sun
And April weaves a trembling ring
Around us, when the day begun
Stands infinitely near the mind
And we, in turn, can stand within
The brightness of the day to find
Strange answers which have been
Pressing Winter's granite hours:
For we are younger than our youth
And we would concentrate on flowers
Instead of more pedestrian truth
Unless, of course, they should turn out
To be the same. Yet Spring this year
And last, and even next, no doubt,
Shouts harsh with lungs of fear,
Rages violent, staggering past
The edge of violence and December;
The while we say, "It will not last,"
And smile; and we can not remember.

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# Dynamo and Virgin Reconsidered

LYNN WHITE, JR.

THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS is a classic in the proper sense that, while it is read by few, it has helped to shape the notions and emotions of millions of Americans who have never even heard of it. Adams, both a grandson and a great-grandson of Presidents of the United States, was thwarted in his own political ambitions and so turned his devious and subtle mind to the problem of the dynamics of human destiny. In his old age he became less a historian than a philosopher of history. "I don't give a damn what happened," he exclaimed to a friend. "What I want to know is why it happened."

But he was a historian-philosopher with the soul of an artist even though, by his own wry diagnosis, being "a quintessence of Boston . . . [his] instinct was blighted from babyhood." As an artist he groped for symbols—not only words but images.

His first great image came to him in the summer of 1895 when, with Senator and Mrs. Henry Cabot Lodge, he toured Normandy and the neighboring regions: Amiens, Bayeux, Coutances, Mont-Saint-Michel, Vitré, Le Mans, Chartres. He had, of course, known of the things he saw; but now, suddenly, he grasped them. Or rather, these incredible churches of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries seized him and shook him until his intellectual teeth rattled. What force had impelled men to infuse stone with such striving and restlessness, and to fling it high into heaven? Why had they filled acres of windows with throbbing colors such as a Yankee had never dreamed of? Why had they enriched every portal and pinnacle with figures from earth, hell and paradise?

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All of these buildings were shrines of St. Mary the Virgin, the Mother of God. It was she, the Queen of Heaven, who had commanded and inspired this titanic outburst of cultural vitality. To explain to himself and to America "why it happened," Henry Adams wrote *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres,* a work of genius but very personal in its interpretation. For Adams' Virgin is not what medieval Catholicism had thought its Virgin was: she is, rather, the life force, the wellspring of fecundity, "reproduction—the greatest and most mysterious of all energies." She had been the Oriental fertility goddesses, Diana of the Ephesians, Venus. In her Christian garb, however, whether "symbol or energy, the Virgin had acted as the greatest force the Western world had ever felt, and had drawn man's activities to herself more strongly than any other power, natural or supernatural, had ever done."

But Henry Adams was puzzled as to why this force, formerly so irresistible, had declined. "The Woman had once been supreme; in France she still seemed potent, not merely as a sentiment, but as a force. Why was she unknown in America? . . . American art, like American language and education, was as far as possible sexless. Society regarded this victory over sex as its greatest triumph." Clearly, America was bowing down before some new power. What was it?

In 1900, at the Trocadero Exposition in Paris, Adams found his second image: the dynamo. "Among the thousand symbols of ultimate energy, the dynamo . . . was the most expressive." To him it became "a symbol of infinity." He felt it to be "a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross." A profound change had taken place in the nature of civilization: "The new American, like the new European, was the servant of the powerhouse, as the European of the twelfth century was the servant of the Church."

Although it was written in 1905, *The Education* was not published until 1918. It was initially read by an America emerging from the First World War, vastly puzzled by its new global power and recoiling from the responsibilities which are the reverse side of power. Having lately become the world's greatest industrial complex, the United States pictured itself as a country youth just ar-



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rived in the big city. It romanticized its agrarian past and the supposed simplicities and warm virtues of an age that had vanished. The Bureau of the Census announced that the frontier had closed in 1890, and Henry Adams proclaimed 1900 as the end of the era of the Virgin and the beginning of the reign of the dynamo. The contrast between his symbols fitted the mood of the nation.

But Adams' images have continued to fascinate thoughtful people because they embody the deepest intellectual issue of our century. Three hundred years ago "modern" philosophy was born when Descartes separated the realm of mind from the realm of matter more sharply than ever before in history. The attributes of matter were mass, extension and motion, all of which can be handled mathematically. Colors, textures, sounds and eventually all the most vividly human experiences and values were declared to be essentially "subjective," and in some way "unreal." Even in the eighteenth century it was being remarked that "Descartes has slain poetry." Physics and chemistry made immense strides; their industrial applications were spectacular; and at last—despite the Romantic reaction—scientist and engineer seemed to dominate the Atlantic civilization. What eluded the mathematical method came to be thought of as illusion, or at least as some strange accident unrelated to the nature of things. People forgot (what St. Augustine had known) that the very concept of number, not to mention the higher reaches of mathematics, was an artifact of, if not a revelation to, the human mind, which cannot be understood in terms of nature devoid of mind. As the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, all that was most human—goodness and beauty, love and sacrifice—seemed most exiled from the "real." In 1903 the young Bertrand Russell gave ultimate expression to the tragedy which is implicit in the Cartesian separation of mind from matter:

> That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness



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of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.

Henry Adams, too, was an orthodox Cartesian, dedicated to salvaging the human values of history by the discovery of laws analogous to those of physics: "a historical formula that should satisfy the conditions of the stellar universe." His most fantastic effort in this direction was an essay, written in 1908, on "The Rule of Phase Applied to History," in which, following a mathematical hypothesis set forth by Yale's Willard Gibbs, he proposed that social transformations are comparable to the phases of matter seen in the change of a solid to a liquid, or of a liquid to a gas. To him the Virgin and the dynamo represented two successive and radically contrasting phases of human destiny.

And yet these two great symbols, designed to achieve intelligibility for the human condition, only served to underscore human defeat. *The Education of Henry Adams* is one of the most reticent of autobiographies: emotion is many layers below the surface. But at his death, in a wallet of very special papers, a lyrical and agonized "Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres" was found which incorporates a prayer to the dynamo clearly prophesying—in 1906 at the latest—the destruction of humanity by atomic energy. The Virgin represented all that was distinctively human, all that the Cartesians regarded as "subjective"; the dynamo pointed to the annihilation of all human values, first by the achievement of a faceless, ant-like society, and then by the victory of impersonal cosmic force over all life.

This is the dread of the twentieth century. Admitting that we have many totalitarianisms and may have more, admitting that the atom is a peril, nevertheless are we justified in believing with Henry Adams that human values are engaged in a last and hopeless duel not only with the death-wish in our own natures but with the en-



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tropy of the universe as well? Symbols are not merely means of expressing thought about experience; often they impel us to schematize our understanding of experience in their own terms. Are the dynamo and the Virgin in fact opposing and mutually exclusive energies?

Even Adams saw the joke when, in the summer of 1904, he bought a French automobile in which to go on pilgrimage to the shrines of Our Lady. However dissimilar spiritual and mechanical forces might seem, the student of history was able to fuse them happily for professional purposes. Was this just a convenient accident, or was it a pragmatic symbol with a validity as great as Adams' dualism?

And when one goes to Beauvais or Laon, what does one see? Structures which are the greatest engineering feats in human history up to the time of their building. The technicians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, far from being traditionalists, were creating an entirely new concept of architecture, dynamic rather than static. In their cathedrals we see a sublime fusion of high spirituality and advanced technology.

Moreover, these are the first vast monuments in all history to be built by free—nay, unionized!—labor. Almost the only branch of technology to make little progress during the Middle Ages was weight-lifting. The freemasons of those centuries, unlike the voiceless slaves and conscript peasants of past ages, would not be bothered with handling big stones. Both Romanesque and Gothic engineers achieved enormous scale with small blocks. That these churches are filled not only with gifts and monuments of the feudal aristocracy but perhaps to an even greater extent with chapels, windows and the like, offered by the guilds of craftsmen and merchants who dominated the walled cities above which the Virgin's temples towered, points to a social revolution closely connected with the technological revolution. And these changes had their roots not merely in economic developments but in religion, which, if vital, can never be divorced from its context.

St. Benedict of Nursia, the founder of the Benedictine Order, is probably the pivotal figure in the history of labor. Greco-Roman



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society had rested on the backs of slaves. Work was the lot of slaves, and any free man who dirtied his hands with it, even in the most casual way, demeaned himself. Plato once sharply rebuked two friends who had constructed an apparatus to help solve a geometrical problem: they were contaminating thought. Plutarch tells us that Archimedes was ashamed of the machines he had built. Seneca remarks that the inventions of his time, such as stenography, were naturally the work of slaves, since slaves alone were concerned with such things. In the classical tradition there is scarcely a hint of the dignity of labor. The provision of Benedict, himself an aristocrat, that his monks should work in fields and shops therefore marks a revolutionary reversal of the traditional attitude toward labor; it is a high peak along the watershed separating the modern from the ancient world. For the Benedictine monks regarded manual labor not as a mere regrettable necessity of their corporate life but rather as an integral and spiritually valuable part of their discipline. During the Middle Ages the general reverence for the laboring monks did much to increase the prestige of labor and the self-respect of the laborer. Moreover, since the days of St. Benedict every major form of Western asceticism has held that "to labor is to pray," until in its final development under the Puritans, labor in one's "calling" became not only the prime moral necessity but also the chief means of serving and praising God. The importance of frugal living and consecrated labor in building up fluid investment-capital and in fostering the rapid expansion of capitalist economy in the regions of Europe and America most deeply affected by the puritan spirit is a commonplace of the economic history of early modern times. The Benedictine ancestry of the puritan attitude toward work is less often emphasized.

Moreover, although St. Benedict had not intended that his monks should be scholars, a great tradition of learning developed in the abbeys following his *Rule*: for the first time the practical and the theoretical were embodied in the same individuals. In antiquity learned men did not work, and workers were not learned. Consequently ancient science consisted mostly of observation and abstract thought; experimental methods were rarely used. The craftsmen had accumulated a vast fund of factual knowledge about natural



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forces and substances, but the social cleavage prevented classical scientists from feeling that stimulus from technology which has been so conspicuous an element in the development of modern experimental science. The monk was the first intellectual to get dirt under his fingernails. He did not immediately launch into scientific investigation, but in his very person he destroyed the old artificial barrier between the empirical and the speculative, the manual and the liberal arts, and thus helped create a social atmosphere favorable to scientific and technological development. It is no accident, therefore, that his ascetic successors, the friar and the Puritan, were eminent and ardent in experiment.

The first power machine, the water wheel, appeared in the Roman Empire in the last century before Christ; but it may have been a barbarian invention, since we know that by the time of Christ it was already used in northern Denmark. Not until after the disintegration of the Western Roman Empire did it become common. By 1086, William the Conqueror's *Domesday Book* shows us that in England there were over 5,600 water mills for some 3,000 communities. Since there is no reason to believe that Britain was technologically in advance of the Continent, this means that by the end of the eleventh century every European was living daily in the presence of a major engine motored by nonhuman power.

This is the sort of situation that breeds new ideas. From the late tenth century onward, water power gradually began to be applied not only to grinding grain but to all sorts of industrial processes: forging, tanning, making the mash for beer, sawing wood, doing the laundry, polishing armor and sharpening knives. In clothmaking one of the most tedious and labor-consuming processes was fulling: for ages men had endlessly tramped the raw cloth in troughs filled with water and fuller's earth until it was properly felted. Now trip hammers powered by water wheels did the job so effectively that in the thirteenth century the English cloth industry shifted from the flat southeast to the more rugged northwest part of the country, where the streams ran a bit faster and good millsites were more available.

The creak of water wheels, then, was a sound as typical of Henry Adams' age of cathedral building as was the *Ave stella maris* chanted



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in praise of the Virgin. Was this pure coincidence, or perhaps even the embryonic form of the modern schizophrenia which separates spiritual values from material concerns? The Middle Ages did not seem to think so. St. Bernard's Cistercian monks were so devoted to the Virgin that every one of their hundreds of monasteries was dedicated to her; yet these White Benedictines seem often to have led the way in the use of power. Some of their abbeys had four or five water wheels, each powering a different workshop.

Streams of water were proving most useful; what about the streams of air? In 1180, just at the moment when great Gothic spires were beginning to pierce the sky, the windmill appears both in Normandy and at Arles. As early as the tenth century there had been crude windmills in eastern Iran, rotating on a vertical axis stuck into the upper millstone. The European windmill, rotating on a horizontal axle tipped at a slight angle above the horizon to increase the turbine action and requiring gears, seems to be a separate and certainly far more effective invention. Within eleven years, that is by 1191, there were windmills from Germany to Provence, and from Yorkshire to Syria, where the first one was built by Crusaders. The windmill spread as rapidly in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century as moving pictures did in the early twentieth. We know, for example, that in the thirteenth century there were at least 120 windmills in and around the Flemish city of Ypres alone.

All of a sudden what has been called the Age of Faith got an entirely new vision of nature as a reservoir of vast forces to be explored, harnessed and used according to human need. Gravity had been little exploited, but by 1199 a new type of counterweight artillery had been invented so powerful that the older forms, inherited from the Romans, became obsolete. Water clocks were a nuisance because in cold weather they froze, and many technicians of the thirteenth century began puttering with the idea of a purely mechanical clock activated by weights. By 1270 Robert the Englishman tells us that they had almost cracked the problem, but not quite. By about 1300 two solutions had been found—one north of the Alps and one in Italy—in the invention of two forms of escapement to regulate the flow of force through such machines. In the fourteenth century no municipality of Europe felt that it could hold up its head unless its



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cathedral or city hall were graced by a monumental clock in which, at the booming of the hours, the kings and prophets of Israel and the locally more admired saints marched and countermarched.

Not only gravity, but the force of compressed air and steam began to be investigated, and the emergence in the seventeenth century of steam engines can be shown to have a direct connection with developments four hundred years earlier. Moreover, the thirteenth century began to make gunpowder. At the beginning it was used for simple jet-propulsion—rockets first appear in Europe in 1258 at Cologne—but by the 1330's cannons are found. The cannon is a one-cylinder internal combustion engine, and all modern motors of this type are technically descended from it. In 1661 when Samuel Moreland first tried to substitute a piston for a cannon ball and apply the force to peaceful work, he used powder in his engine; and the conscious analogy of guns continued to handicap the development of internal combustion machines until the nineteenth century, when liquid fuels were tried.

In terms of Henry Adams' contrast between the Virgin and the dynamo, there is a final item from the thirteenth century which is suggestive. The most vocal, although perhaps not the greatest, scientist of the time was Friar Roger Bacon, whose scientific interests, incidentally, were religiously motivated: he constantly insists that we must search not only the Book of Scripture (for which purpose he himself learned both Greek and Hebrew) but likewise the Book of Nature if we are to understand the mind of God. Among his contemporaries, Bacon most admired a certain Peter of Maricourt, who lived in Paris and carried on scientific experiments. Presumably he was as devout a Christian as Friar Roger, since he is sometimes called Peter the Pilgrim, implying a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In 1269 Peter was serving as a military engineer in the service of Charles of Anjou, younger brother of St. Louis of France, at the siege of Lucera, a Moslem city in southern Italy. The siege was boring; so Peter wrote the first treatise on the magnet. The mariner's compass had come into use in the late twelfth century; whether it arrived from China is still uncertain. In Amalfi, Peter had watched compass makers at work and had become interested in magnetic phenomena. His recorded observations are the basis of all later study



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of magnetism. At the end of his little monograph he offers the design of a wheel to be turned perpetually by magnetic force. The fact that it would not work is far less important than the fact that he attempted it. In 1600 when William Gilbert published his great book on the magnet, he consciously rested his work on Peter's; and when, over two hundred years later, Faraday invented the dynamo, he knew his debt to Gilbert. Peter of Maricourt's abortive magnetic wheel is the grandfather of the dynamo.

When Roger Bacon wrote, "Machines may be made by which the largest ships, with only one man steering them, will move faster than if they were filled with rowers; wagons may be built which will move with unbelievable speed and without the aid of beasts; flying machines can be constructed in which a man may beat the air with mechanical wings like a bird . . . ; machines will make it possible for men to go to the bottom of seas and rivers," he was speaking not as a lonely visionary but rather for the technicians of his age. And today we know that these hopes were not fantastic.

Indeed, by Bacon's time the actual accomplishment was great. For two hundred years and more there had already been a rapid replacement of human by nonhuman energy wherever industry demanded large amounts of power or where the required motion was so simple and repetitive that a man could be replaced by a mechanism. The chief glory of the Middle Ages was not, as Henry Adams thought, its cathedrals, its epics, its vast structures of scholastic philosophy, or even its superb music, which Adams' nieces learned to sing for his delectation: it was the building for the first time in history of a complex civilization which was upheld not on the sinews of sweating slaves and coolies but primarily by nonhuman power. Moreover, it was the century in which the cult of the Virgin Mary achieved its most marvelous expression and which likewise first envisaged the concept of a laborsaving, power technology which has played so large a part in the formation of the modern world.

This was no accident. In 1953 Margaret Mead went back, after twenty-five years of absence, to visit the primitive but intelligent Manus living on islands near northern New Guinea. She wanted to see what had happened to these few thousand people as a result of their experience during the Second World War, when more than a



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million American troops passed through their country in the attack against Japan. She found that the Manus had two very definite and related opinions about Americans.

First of all, to them Americans seemed to be people "who treated each other and the Manus with whom they came in contact 'like brothers,' who, in fact, treated their neighbor like themselves in the fundamental sense that he was assumed to be the same kind of guy." Even American racial prejudices seemed to them relatively insignificant: pitch black themselves, they rejoiced to see black Americans moving with apparent freedom in this novel, friendly world.

And second, the Manus were much impressed by the idea that power machinery could so greatly lighten the burdens of even the poor and subordinate. Miss Mead, who knows their language, quotes one of them as saying, "The Americans believe in having work done by machines so that men can live to old age instead of dying worn out while they are still young." And another: "From the Americans we learned that human beings are irreplaceable and unexpendable, while all material things are replaceable and so expendable." And another: "From the Americans we learned that it is *only* human beings that are important." Admitting that the Manus saw not America but only the American armed forces under very special circumstances, Miss Mead states that nevertheless they "shrewdly recognized that the American willingness to sacrifice things for people came from having plenty of things, so many that there were always more, so many because of the apparently inexhaustible productivity of a machine economy, built not upon the limited strength of human beings but upon the unlimited potentialities of machines."

The Virgin and the dynamo are not opposing principles permeating the universe: they are allies. The growth of medieval power technology, which escaped Adams' attention, is a chapter in the conquest of freedom.

More than that, to those who search out "why it happened," it is part of the history of religion. The humanitarian technology which in later centuries has grown from medieval seeds was not rooted in economic necessity; for such "necessity" is inherent in every society, yet has found expression only in the Occident, nourished in the



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tradition of Western theology. It is ideas which make necessities conscious. The laborsaving power machines of the later Middle Ages were produced by the religious assumption of the infinite worth of even the most seemingly degraded human personality, by an instinctive repugnance toward subjecting any man to a monotonous drudgery which seems less than human in that it requires the exercise neither of intelligence nor of choice. The Middle Ages, believing that the Heavenly Jerusalem contains no temple, began to explore the practical implications of this profoundly Christian paradox. Although to labor is to pray, the goal of labor is to end labor.

We have been too easily impressed by the dualities of Descartes and by the majestic symbols of his disciple, Henry Adams. Closely observed, experience does not in fact fall into neat opposing categories—spirit and matter, religion and technology, man and cosmos, cathedral and powerhouse. Reality is more complex than this, and its parts more intricately interlocked. Man is a bit cosmic; the cosmos is a bit humane; and the free man may worship without despair.



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# *Ode for a Windy Afternoon*

ROBERT PACK

How did this hour issue from the last?
Nothing in past time opened in this way,
Nothing rode the wind or slid within
The climbing currents of the sea, exploding
In the rainbow of the spray, that this
Should come to pass; nothing spoke through flame,
No voice broke sharply from the mountain caves
To ask—where do you go, what is your name?
The voice that did not sound I listen to,
Says shake, wake yourself, take off your shoes,
Splash water in your face, follow, follow
In the water drop, stop, perceive the sky
Curve round and draw you in, again begin
To breathe, to feel, and ask why does the moisture
Gather to your lips, why do your bones
Go dry, and why does every blooming, rising,
Falling thing—the midnight whippoorwill,
The boisterous bear—wear the actual world
Away and fade into the atmosphere
You've made that closed before this hour began?
When did this hour begin, and when the one
Before, and when did time put forth its fruit
To ripen in the sun, begun from nothing,
Turning seasons in the blood, flooding
The earth and the stone and the inhale of the air?



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And who am I to care how those dark mountains
Nourished peeling farms and plotted fields;
Why should I wonder what the donkey dreams
Or what the idiotic chicken fears
Or what the farm girl tattles to her pillow
In the rocking of the night? Voices of dark,
Voices of light, things spoken I can't hear
From that hour gone and from the hours to come
Sound, sing and echo round me once again,
Full, compelling, telling, told to me
As if I knew and asked to hear again
That I might better hear and better see—
Although I don't know when this hour began,
And can't tell if it's passing or it's passed,
Or if this hour issued from the last.

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# Nobility and the United States

OSCAR MANDEL

> You do not feel that in man there lives a spark of purer fire, which, when it is not fed, when it is not fanned, is covered by the ashes of daily cravings and indifference; yet, however late, it is almost never smothered.
>
> *Wilhelm Meister, I, 14*

THE WANT OF A FEELING FOR ARISTOCRACY, among the rich as well as the poor, among the intelligentsia and among artists, constitutes the most signal failure of the American spirit. To the death of this spirit we can attribute too the gradual recession of European culture or, to use the Europeans' unflattering term, its Americanization. The word "aristocracy" itself has been used in various familiar ways: to refer to a social or political caste, or, in a figurative and etymologically more dubious sense, to moral, intellectual or aesthetic excellence. But let us use the term as comprehensively as possible, intending not only moral and intellectual distinction, and not only aesthetic elevation, but also a distinct social group ideally embodying these qualities, and possessing in addition that much despised virtue known as manners, or good breeding. Thus the *feeling* for aristocracy is the desire for, or the picturing of, a harmonious nobility which expresses itself by moral, intellectual, aesthetic and social distinctiveness, and in that division of mankind known as class consciousness. This feeling is traditionally the possession of an actual (and, of course, imperfect) aristocracy and of its intellectual allies.

Of course, the notion of class consciousness appears so odious in the United States (as it does in Russia) that its merit has come to be discussed as little as that of, say, the emancipation of the slaves.

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We tend to think of emancipation, and of our egalitarianism in general, as clear entries on the side of progress—as evils we have conquered. We even think that a system of social classes is incompatible with that form of love which we call humanitarianism. But social equality and the sense of human brotherhood are not, as a matter of fact, necessarily functions of each other; and surely in an age when equality has done nothing to disarm us of atomic bombs, flame throwers and guided missiles, it is permissible at least to re-examine our egalitarian assumptions.

The feeling for aristocracy is above all a hope. At no epoch in history did the thinking part of society believe that the political aristocracy had in fact realized this hope. Nevertheless, just as the ideals of chivalry could never be called useless, though they served mostly as guides or self-flattery, so the feeling for aristocracy (which, indeed, includes the ideal of chivalry) persisted from age to age, in different guises, not only as an overwhelming value but, in fact, as absolute necessity. Literature supported this feeling without hesitation and without afterthought. Perhaps literature created it. The feeling for aristocracy was too natural to be argued; it was one of those silent convictions or conditions of thought which Carlyle so wisely recommends—those which require no analyses and no defenses. It is the feeling we find in Vergil, in the romances of chivalry and all epics, in the Italian lyric, whether of Petrarch or of Poliziano, most sparklingly in Shakespeare's comedies, most clearly in the French neoclassical drama, and even, if we skip a little, in such places as Jane Austen's novels. We find it, I believe, in the dark Jacobean tragedies, and we find it in Goethe and in Tolstoy. But it begins to fade in the nineteenth century, and what is Baudelaire's dandyism, what is Mallarmé's hermeticism, what is that whole cult of the exquisite, from Gautier to Huysmans, and what is Yeats's magic-mongering, if not the feeling for aristocracy, too sick to walk in the traffic of the streets, taking refuge in closets, among coteries, reduced from a grand moral force to a tangential cult?

The feeling for aristocracy is above all a hope. If it had not been this, if Vergil, if Michelangelo, if Beethoven had not hoped, they would not have been memorable. All great, serious art, and much comic art, is idealizing art. What keeps it from being sentimental



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art, utopian art or fantasy is the cohesion of the true and the possible. As a matter of course, silently, writers of all epochs but ours have fused, within a single plot, within fourteen lines, within a single character, human truth with human possibility. Within Othello, within Desdemona, lie truth and possibility: humanity *might* be thus, while humanity *is* thus. Racine's Phèdre is bad but great; Iago is at least intelligent; Faust grandiose. Though never afraid of the truth, the great writers implicitly hoped, in that the very crimes and the very sorrows they portrayed belonged to those whose stature was enviable, worth emulating—to characters who represented to readers and spectators a perennial *ought*—in a word, to aristocrats. Even the good manners of French drama, even the mild decencies of *Cranford,* express this hope, this possibility of a harmonious nobility expressed by moral, intellectual, aesthetic and social distinctiveness.

Therefore, it is far from absurd to say that true art is moral. True art is the great indirect preacher. The absurdity is to say that art and morality spin in independent orbits. Where but in the idealization of man shall we seek the reason for the joy we feel in even the saddest work of art? Great art is everywhere human, and better than human. Those who believe that the feeling for aristocracy is a vacuous one may be right; but they cannot create great and serious art. Civilizations die when they have been forced to give up hope. The very essence of civilization is the hope, the energy, for betterment. (Hope is energy, and energy is hope.) And I do not speak of that invidious so-called progress which is marked by the prevalence of bathtubs and airplanes (though these are no impediments either), but again I mean the tendency toward aristocracy. Our literature has given up this hope. Worse, it elaborately belabors its bankruptcy. For the first time in its history, art has in fact become a mirror held up to nature rather than a challenge to nature. And what is left? We admire the modern novel; we cannot *love* it. I mean we do not feel the urge to keep it in our pockets and read it on all occasions, to fondle it, to memorize passages, to be tender with it. Can we say we read our violent novelists with *pleasure,* with *joyousness*? "This pleasure," says Montaigne, "consoles my old age and my solitude, it blunts the darts of all but



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the sharpest pains; to rid myself of an unpleasant thought, I run to my books." Fancy us running to Mr. Faulkner to rid ourselves of an unpleasant thought! No, we cannot *love* this literature (or this painting or this architecture—these antiseptic blocks of concrete and glass visibilized by livid fluorescent light) because it has no hope; and it has not hope in that it wants the feeling for aristocracy. Our most impressive art is that which has abandoned mankind.

That individual works should be purely negative, that certain authors should write of fools, criminals or dullards as though no other life were possible on earth—all this is allowable. But if the thought that we are "caught in the insoluble prison of being" (Wolfe's awkward phrase), in "the total animal soup of time" (Allen Ginsberg's improvement)—if the thought that life is an *incurable* disease becomes a kind of cultural premise, then our disease is a worse one even than we think. Unhappily, the West—from Germany to California—has lost its energy. Poetry, whose mood used to be imperative—

> At the round earths imagin'd corners, blow
> Your trumpets, Angells, and arise, arise
> From death, you numberlesse infinities
> Of soules—

has now declined into a sad indicative or a complete syntactical disintegration. Who, we ask, shall preach what ideals to whom? We prefer the "slice of life," and affect not to remember that until recently literature was moral, and often, indeed (shall we dare the word?) patriotic. Who would create serious patriotic art in the West today after the manner of Pindar, Vergil, Corneille or Tennyson? Who in the West would require, as Wilhelm Meister does, that the theater stand at the service of the state's economic enterprises? We know better; not, God knows, without reason, we are disenchanted and disgruntled. Therefore I make no brief for a new patriotic art (or even a one-world art, concerning civil instead of international wars) or optimistic art of any kind. Nor am I wishing a grand return to Christian piety. We have had, it is true, a "religious revival," adorned by some of our choicest spirits; but I doubt whether high-brow Christianity has infused much hope even in these. Other hopes must be found, without precluding pessimistic



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art. *The Duchess of Malfi* is as terrible as *Light in August*, but its pessimism is not suicidal: the Duchess is worth while; she is what humanity might be. But Faulkner, who has brought the Jacobean darkness to America, has wiped out the Duchess, the image of hope. His aristocracy, unlike Webster's, lived in the irrecoverable past.

Of course, it would be an exaggeration to say that serious modern literature is inevitably desperate. What matters is the cultural tendency, the intellectual norm. Yet even if we address ourselves to the messages of respectable hope, the occasional affirmations, we can usually find a snake under that stone as well. Nine times out of ten we are invited to admire some primitive section of society or mindless behavior. These authors renounce civilization and intelligence even in their yea-saying. While music returns to the tom-tom, while painting adores Africa, while sociologists pore over the child and psychoanalysts finger the subconscious, the "affirmative" literary men invent a mystique of instinct, brute power, mindlessness, and seek out incoherent heroes in the corners and dead ends of civilization, among the depressed, the forgotten, the hapless innocent, the coarse, the elementary. In their books, civilization means decay, and they propose rebirth through the inchoate. Affirmation though this may be, it is actually treason to twenty-five centuries of hope in *cultivation*, in the rising of man above nature, in aristocracy. Our fashion now is to be entranced by aboriginal dancing, Aztec incantations, frenzied jazz and Congolese masks. I am far from denying the power and the permanence of the primitive: all is not danced in a gavotte, and man ought not to forget his origins, his mother the dark earth. But, as Baudelaire liked to say, man is at his best when he is, in a high sense, unnatural. If ever I hear a folk ballad superior to Schubert's "Raven," I shall join the backward rout. Meantime I am satisfied to count myself a member of a civilization which has discovered at any rate that a cow is better roasted than worshipped. We are not proud enough of the West.

In the graphic arts, the abandonment of mankind has consisted in the shift from men to shapes, from events to colors, from morality to geometry. The Expressionists, it is true, often launched more direct attacks on humanity, and to that extent remained "in the tradition"; but the more typical phenomenon of this century



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is the disintegration or elimination of the "human form divine," and, along with this, the death of the hope that lies at the bottom even of Rembrandt and Goya. Still, perhaps the most striking, because the most visible, area of dehumanization is in public architecture. Our great buildings are made for cubic men. Impressive as they are—and they are very impressive—they stand in their frigid glass, their white concrete, their icy chromium, like nerveless symbols of homelessness.

The feeling for aristocracy is transitive; it impinges on others and takes the natural form of more or less direct exhortation—

> O Florence! your sudden wealth and your upstart
> rabble, dissolute and overweening,
> already set you weeping in your heart!—

or else of that subtler idealization without actual program of which the Duchess of Malfi is an instance. But in our time, this feeling has become solipsistic. We have in this country a substantial minority of artists, scholars, teachers, scientists and unattached intellectuals who cultivate a quiet, private and sometimes embarrassed nobility. To many of these men and women the idea of their own superiority is actually painful, and they disguise it as far as they can in their speech, their dress, their manners. With a slangy style many of them seem to deprecate their own distinction and to apologize for it. They are careful not to proclaim their difference. Much less do they dream of exacting deference from their inferiors. In fact, words like "deference" and "nobility" are taking their departure from the common language. Writers and speakers use them "in a certain sense," or else they are cant.

Many American intellectuals live in a state of amiable schizophrenia: as liberals they refuse to believe that they are "any better than the next fellow," but as intellectuals they leave the populace alone, or they revile it while voting in its favor. If we except the few who are still trying to "elevate the masses," our true intellectuals live in a corner. They have ceased to exhort because they have lost their audience. Nobody wants them unless they can furnish an atomic bomb or a better television script. Just as under absolute monarchs the intellectuals conceal a part of themselves and



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are not in private quite what they seem in public, so in our democracy droves of the intelligent apply a lower faculty to the service of the masses, writing advertisements (for which they blush in private), composing scenarios and scripts (which they despise at cocktail parties), painting and drawing on salary (so they can earn enough money, they say, *really* to paint), inventing another toothpaste (while dreaming of research) or building a lavender ranch-type house (ridiculing their customers under their breaths). That which is noble in them they despair of practicing, or else they practice it in seclusion, "after hours," when no one is looking. Thus, while they are called upon to do char-work with their lower faculties, that portion of them which ought to exhort and lead mankind, that which makes for aristocracy, is secreted out of sight. The worse part of society is fed, nursed, amused and cuddled (for reasonable wages) by the better part. Consequently the people are leaderless and content to be so. They even contrive to elect Presidents they will not have to revere. As for that section of mankind called Society, which used to set a few external rules making for aristocracy, it has altogether withdrawn into discreet conformity, and if it carouses, does so unnoticed. The rich have turned into chameleons on the tree of democracy.

Traditionally, the three sources of the feeling for aristocracy were the political aristocracy itself (in spite of its *actual* turpitude), the church with its saints or prophets (in spite of *its* actual turpitude) and the artists. The artists were either employees of the political aristocracy or independent but willing allies. No one, I think, will deny that with a few exceptions, serious art has been, up to our own time, an aristocratic pursuit, by which I understand that it was supported by the effective aristocracy (which, as in Athens, might go under another name), and that it had the feeling for aristocracy. The Greek drama is no exception, for though it addressed itself to the population, like Elizabethan drama it was supported and protected by the rich. We usually ignore the fact that even the characters of serious literature were members of the political aristocracy. We blink and say that this was a social concession or that nobility of rank is a symbol, et cetera, et cetera. But these are lies: part



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of the feeling for aristocracy consists in the equation between nobility of position and nobility of mind. A virtuous President of the United States is something finer than a kindly John Doe. Democratic though we may be, we still shudder more at the death of the great than at the everyday casualties reported in the newspaper. The feeling for aristocracy is the hope or, if you will, the vision of a fusion of every nobility, including that of rank and breeding no less than that of morals and intellect. That is why, furthermore, the traditional hero is not only socially noble but also intelligent. Our own literature does not pay much attention to the intelligent. Zola —perhaps Flaubert—inaugurated the epoch of dumb protagonists, which Faulkner, with his rich gallery of morons and idiots, has brought to its morbid perfection. Abandoning the hero as a fable, much of our contemporary literature has made its theme that mud can't help being mud, that it is unhappy or dirty or ought to be made comfortable; but I propose that none of these subjects is fit concern for a whole nation of serious writers. Their *ultimate* concern ought not to be *l'homme moyen sensuel*, photographed, for zoological or political reasons, in all his unedifying stances. Though the task, as Dostoevsky and Conrad and Silone knew, is not an easy one, a transfiguration must be performed. These three authors wrested heroism from the human muck by dint of an agony of effort, falling a thousand times on the way. Flaubert (the protovillain in our piece) merely became a zoologist; Hemingway said *nada*; and Mr. Ginsberg, looking for innocence, howls.

I have spoken of the minority who practice a kind of nobility in private. Because privacy still exists, the cultural climate has been favorable to the one form of art which can be noble and private at the same time: lyric poetry. Sappho entertained her friends at banquets by singing her poems and pinching her lyre. Her relations with mankind at large were not relevant to the quality of her art. And the immortal themes persist. If the lyric poets too have retreated from mankind, it has never been their function to conquer it. In fact, the lonely cage today has made them sing more exquisitely than did the public Victorians. Where form is the final test of greatness, the abandonment of mankind is no impediment.



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With the spread of democracy, the upper classes began by losing their political influence and ended by losing their cultural ascendancy. In the United States, Adams is succeeded by Jackson; in England, the gentry is reduced to that empty role of "barbarians," as Matthew Arnold calls them; and in the twentieth century, demos inherits the realm. It would be foolish to deplore this as a mere calamity. But the glories of democracy have been sung too often to require another chorus. Enough to remark that the upper classes bled and deserved to bleed for their failure to realize the vision of aristocracy presented to them (and at their own instance!) by artists, philosophers and churchmen. Now they have withdrawn; some remnants live out their pathetic uselessness in dark areas of Boston or in English country houses open to the public for a fee. The rich now, to paraphrase Milton, are but the poor writ large. They do not form a different class. They too, like their employees, are leaderless and have lost the ability to look upward or to demand from others an upward glance. They are not interested in aristocracy. In the nineteenth century, instead of affording through their fortunes the chance of creating an American architecture (not to mention the other arts), they translated Loire chateaux in North Carolina. For all their money, they could not emerge from the proletariat and turn themselves into a true aristocracy. They did attempt lavishness; but the twentieth century is too serious for golden spittoons, and has neither lavishness nor aristocracy. The vision of moral heroism, intellectual perfection and good breeding has been supplanted by the vision, or rather the virtual accomplishment, of prosperity and social justice. True, I have read American protests against "American materialism" by the hundreds. We are blessed with an uncommon number of professional recriminators against material goods and upholders of "the finer things of life." But aristocracy embraces material prosperity; human dignity is not a concept of subsistence-level societies; even Diogenes and St. Simeon Stylites required rich societies as foils for their exertions. The real question is, "Who has the wealth, and what does he do with it?" Let Lorenzo the Magnificent and let Voltaire keep their money. But he who can only buy several pink Cadillacs with it, or travel over the



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world sporting a necktie adorned with large pineapples, unacquainted with his own language and replacing courtesy by heartiness—that man has money but not wealth, and the best answer to him is the federal tax.

When the leaders of society disappeared, the artist hung in the air with his great sermon in his hands. He had always worked for an elite and had never really lost his faith in his patrons; nowhere else could he find fit receptacles for the moral exhortation which is great art. Perhaps he actually hoped that some day they might acquire from him his own feeling for aristocracy. In the first enthusiastic years of democracy, many artists simply readdressed their message and sent it to the new public, so that for a while there were some considerable artists trying a vision of brotherhood on the masses: Hugo in France, Dickens in England, Tolstoy in Russia, Whitman in America.

But as an artistic goal, inspiring or converting the masses was soon forgotten. Long before educators began to doubt the efficacy of mass education, artists gave up hoping. The masses, they found, had more urgent business going than nobility. The great movement of mankind was speeding toward the consummation of pink Cadillacs, and, as I have said, even the vocabulary of hope—"nobility," "virtue," "heroism," "breeding," "ceremony"—became all but archaic. Facts always breed their apologetics: since there is no one left to exhort, our fashionable theories of art have conveniently substituted form for content and declare (not fearing the stares of Aeschylus, Dante and Milton) that art should not and does not exhort, that it has nothing to do with moral persuasion. From the days of moral art, one sad vestige remains—proletarian art—which convinces us that the rich are unjust, without satisfying us that their victims are admirable.

It is an instructive paradox that, whereas Greece, with its slaves, and medieval Europe, with its cruelly rigid class-divisions, produced an art in which all the people, high or low, rich or poor, could delight, in our democracies art has split in two, the larger part consisting of true confessions and quiz programs for the masses, and the smaller part of *Finnegans Wake* and the like for an aristocracy of practically nobody. To be sure, in all epochs there has been *some*



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division—e.g., a court literature of romances and a popular literature of fabliaux. But the division was less marked in these iniquitous societies (Chaucer wrote fabliaux, and Arthurian romances became popular property) and the best art, like Homer or religious sculpture, was held in common. But why does art tend to become unified in hierarchical societies and "dualized" in egalitarian ones? One answer may be that in hierarchical societies the masses have less power to demand art, and that, to the extent that they are not utterly crushed, they are in the habit of looking up to their betters and of trying to emulate them. That the merchants, artisans and yeomen did not enjoy quite the same aspects of a given work of art as those enjoyed by the upper or the educated class, we may safely suppose; yet, in general, circumstances induced them to share in the common idiom. This is why we rightly think of the masses of another day as having had better taste than mankind does today. With democracy, of course, the liberated populace became itself the buyer of art, and imposed its taste freely, without troubling to consult an elite. Hence the split in art: the caterers to mass taste on the one side, and the "true" artists without allegiance on the other.

In this connection, let me say a word about contemporary Russian art. I have seen a little of their statuary and their painting in reproductions, like everyone else, but I know their literature only by hearsay. Assuming that this literature is actually of the class which extols the manufacture of extra tractors as a sublime human achievement, I should say that we are wrong to blame this misery on the fact that Russia is ruled by dictators. Seeing two evils, we naturally conclude that they must be organically linked, and so we flatter ourselves with the figment that "there is no art where there is no freedom." In reality, some dictatorships do annihilate thought and creation ("I draw my pistol when I hear the word culture," someone says in that infamous Nazi play *Schlageter*), but others cultivate, honor and even finance them. To go no further than the obvious, Caesar Augustus and Louis XIV stand out as abolishers of freedom and patrons of culture. And in the days of the Greeks an intellectual could usually escape the persecutions of democracy by removing himself to the tyrannies of Sicily or Macedonia. The real



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question is not that of freedom, but whether the intellectual can be genuinely loyal to the system—dogmatic, half-free or free—which prevails in his country. Medieval Catholicism did not allow substantial deviations, yet it commanded loyal support with the results in art and thought that we know. What ails Russian literature, therefore, is not so much a lack of freedom as a dedication to the ignoble by a dictatorship of proletarians over the proletariat.

With the disappearance of a political aristocracy, with the reduction of the church to a center of sociability and soothing homiletics, and with the quarantining of the artist and the theoretician, the leaderless plebeians (rich and poor alike) have dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to self-admiration. They do not seek models to imitate or a superior taste to emulate. True, we are not in a jungle. Occasionally we stumble on a modern house which is not shamed to dust by colonial architecture; occasionally the public patronizes a difficult and intelligent play. The trouble with the plebeians was never that they had low tastes or no morals, but that they jumbled good and bad together and could not distinguish. We know that they willingly clapperclawed Shakespeare's plays. They did as much for Lumpkin Ignoto's the next afternoon. The over-all effect of a landscape organized by the populace is unkemptness rather than uniform ugliness. The unkemptness is intellectual and moral as well as aesthetic. Much, for instance, could be said about the proliferation of bizarre Protestant sects—typical inventions of the unchecked popular imagination. Were and are not these sects *permitted* by the absence of a focus of leadership, everywhere respected even if not clearly understood? Superstition—all the ejaculations of vulgar prophets unaware of standards of thought—has given Christianity in the United States its uncouth diversity. Freed from the control of a superior caste, religion became intellectual bad taste.

The world does not live on correct taste, noble morality or even intellectual acuity, and I am not suggesting revolutions. This is merely an inquiry. If we ask an explanation for what ugliness we do discover in the life about us, we find it in the extinction of leadership, the loss of reverence, the muddling of hierarchy or, in short, the want of a feeling for aristocracy. Much has been written



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about our new suburbias, where flat boxes eye one another across barren hills stickled with telephone poles. Outside of the old residential centers, America is becoming a great slum equipped with social justice. Is cheap housing necessarily ugly? Not if popular taste is good. The residents of our slums think their houses beautiful. But these people are leaderless: no one with a feeling for aristocracy has been able to hold their attention and suggest models. They do not want, as the political aristocracy did, images of hope, images of a possible heroism, images of possible beauty shown to them. But if houses have been criticized, other blemishes have almost vanished from the consciousness of even the most atrabilious critics. Is it seemly that in a university the students should dress as though they were pausing between the digging of two ditches? In England they wear gowns; in many countries they still rise when their instructor enters the room. But when the populace becomes the country, there is no looking up. The word "snobbery" usually dismisses the subject. I recall the touching words Yeats wrote for his daughter:

> And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
> Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
> . . . . . .
> How but in custom and in ceremony
> Are innocence and beauty born?

The feeling for aristocracy, which this great man possessed so inveterately, unites appropriate dress and moral congruity, courtesy and heroism. An elegant Elizabethan lyric is understood only by an elegant mind. We teach it, in our folly, as though all the crowds at football games could stomach it.

With mass education the universities ceased to be centers of moral or aesthetic leadership. The tentative advance of a few scholars suddenly met a trampling army of plebeian students, and those poor few who entertained the idea of standards and hierarchies submitted without more ado to the stampede, like Don Quixote under the hogs. Today our universities, manned by tangential intellectuals, produce either more tangential intellectuals or additions to the populace or caterers to the populace. Our language has gone the same way: it keeps growing—but so does a



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cancer. "Eats," says the sign of the roadside diner. Wherever we look, wherever we listen, we find the depredations of a populace left without standards, and desiring none. Occasionally an affable dictatorship—like that of Parisian designers—creates an oasis of good taste. For the rest—automobiles with fins, geometry passing for interior decoration, neon signs on churches—fashions and customs meander from bad to bad. Moral excellence declines as well, for we are content as a nation to have the inducements and opportunities for doing evil removed from us ("Retro, Satana!" is the motto of every bureaucracy) and think ourselves lucky that occasions for moral and physical heroism have been reduced by machinery to nearly none at all. In the vast organizations of government, armed forces and business, decisions—the moral acts—are made by boards, committees or faceless and undiscoverable employees "somewhere along the line." Bureaucracy cannot be blamed, cajoled, exhorted or worshipped, as kings and even tyrants can. It is all mouth, no ears and nearly no brain, and it superannuates moral excellence, the virtue possible only to responsible individuals. In many business offices all employees contribute weekly to a "gift fund" which operates as an anonymous and automatic congratulator or condoler of the sick, the wedded and the parturient, so that even the minor exertions of generosity can be avoided. The instance is trifling but worth recording.

What shall we say of endeavors to "elevate the people"? This humane notion takes many forms. Mass education is one of them. Another is the multiplication of symphony concerts. Most of our cities have respectable museums and libraries. Ladies' groups sponsor a few chamber music recitals. Clubs discuss "great books." And what else? The whole nation is a vast and ghostly museum and a refuge for frightened or hungry Europeans. The good folk who are "elevating the people" are no doubt inheriting this office from the traditional occupation of conveying a feeling for aristocracy to the elite. Now their subjects are the whole people. And the people laugh at them, or else make a few pious motions. Then they return to the television sets and the basketball games which so offend the culture-dispensers. The people act from a right instinct. They have,



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in a sense, watched TV programs since Adam begot them, and no one is going to disturb them now.

Where can the artist find a new elite willing to employ him? Where will he find an audience to revive in him the desire to show the life which might be? It would not matter if I knew, since these social movements are neither impelled nor directed by pamphleteers. But in any event, the alliance between the intellectuals and the proletariat is over. This alliance (if we can call such a one-sided affair an alliance) began about the time of the French and the Industrial Revolutions, and it was fed by an emotion which the eighteenth century practically invented: humanitarianism. The oppressed masses found their vocal cords in the educated and humane men and women who pitied them. Even those whose best solution consisted in the distribution of Bibles deserve our regard. In short, the victory of the lower classes owes much to the work of the intellectuals, but the intellectuals earned few thanks in return. What the thinking man earned was toleration: something less than apotheosis. It is no exaggeration to say that the new public cashiered him. Now that the work of pity is done, he cannot take his mind off the great betrayal. But he is still a left-winger, by and large, still a Democrat or a Socialist or what-have-you, out of a kind of habit perhaps, forgetting that the poor coal miner, to whom he had reached his hand in the evil days, is richer than he and has quite forgotten him.

I propose we let the matter rest there. The time has come to stop sulking; we must twitch our mantles and try new pastures. The time has come to stop demanding "culture" of the masses and to stop reproving them for their "low tastes." Their tastes are normal. We resent them only because we expected too much: the more fools we. Horror or pity for the way of life of the majority, as expressed in novels and plays about human brutality, lust, greed and idiocy, is a product of disappointed idealism. If we could recall the artists of former ages, they would be astonished by the vehemence of our disgust. Even in Twain and Hardy we still find the common people as the natural subject of *humor* (though, indeed, we learn more truth about "plain folk" from *A Midsummer*



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*Night's Dream* and *Huckleberry Finn* than from a hundred solemn pieces of naturalism). To be sure, the serious approach to the masses was inevitable in the new civilization. The livelihood of the Renaissance artist did not, after all, depend on the masses, and one could be fond of a bumpkin who stayed more or less quietly in the place God had allotted him on earth. The Renaissance artist could afford his nonchalance. Yet, though time has changed us, this nonchalance is what we must regain. We need to forget our resentment, our sense of frustration over the uninspirable majority, and whatever sentimental expectations of a noble proletariat, viewing nothing but the classics on television sets, we may still be entertaining. The sooner we embrace once again the idea of hierarchy, the sooner we can send out emissaries toward a new elite fit to be addressed. Perhaps we can create this elite. Surely artists and all the "useless" thinkers are not condemned to write forever only to each other. We must find a deliverance from precious art on one side, and on the other side from those bitter and "depressing" novels which keep explaining, again and again, with never-ceasing and foolish despair, that the ignoble are ignoble. We must, above all, find *heroes* for our literature; we must return to the idealizing function of art.

We may wonder whether the vision of hope—that is to say, the feeling for aristocracy—is forever denied to the populace. Will there ever be a time when all men and women share in the same intellectual and emotional life—when a new Chrétien de Troyes, a new Spenser, a new Racine, a new Tolstoy reveal aspects of nobility to the commonest among men? Whatever we may think of the future, the time at any rate is not now. We have given the masses premature titles to maturity, and our punishment has been despair.



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# *The Flight to Cytherea*

LOUIS SIMPSON

There are designs in curtains that can kill,
Insidious intentions in a chair;
In conversation, silence, sitting still,
The demon of decorum and despair.

Once, when I felt like that, I used to go
Abroad. I've made my marches drunk on night,
Hands in my pockets, pipe sparks flying so,
A liner to the tropics of the light.

Night is the people's theater, sad and droll.
There are the lovers, leaning on each other;
The businessmen, out for a little stroll
With their success; the bum who calls you brother.

And then, I've flown. I've risen like a sail,
A plane—the roads beneath shone bright and bare—
A black umbrella cracking in the gale
Over an ocean blank as a nightmare.

And came to Paris. I'm not talking of
Your chestnut blossoms, but the soldier's town,
The Butte, the calvados, odors of love,
Where for a little while I settled down.

In Africa I was. Beneath my wings
The lions roared. I floated on tobacco;
I made the eyeballs of the savage kings
Roll up. I spent a fortune at Monaco.



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Then off again, to heights where the air fails,
The Alps are only shadows to the West,
That patch is India, the den of whales
A puddle . . . . Ecstasies on Everest!

And glided out beyond the atmosphere
Toward the moon. It trembled like a bell.
"Step right up, gentlemen!" Then sudden fear
Opened. I felt the precipice. I fell.

Down down like an umbrella I unfurled
My bones. I must have fallen for a week;
Then slowly and more slowly as the world
Unwrinkled, valley, plain and mountain peak.

And fell into the country of your eyes,
Since when I have lived comfortably here;
My thoughts are only clouds in summer skies,
And everything is perfect, calm and clear.

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# The World Turned Upside Down

THEODORE BAIRD

WE TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT THE SURRENDER actually took place on American soil, and that in Brooklyn, New York, or Warsaw, Indiana, or Camden, New Jersey, the exact battlefield has already been commemorated by some dingy monument. Yet we can still put aside national pride long enough to look toward what we love to call the Tradition of Western Culture and examine once more that handsomely framed group picture of the Writers of Great Books, surrounded by their accompanying Trends and Tendencies, the whole illuminated by the orient light of the Eternal Values. There on one side—plainly he has slipped in uninvited—stands the distant, shady and triumphant figure of Daniel Defoe. He struck the first telling blow. He has formed our minds.

Defoe relocates the human imagination. He uses his imagination, his way of conceiving of human behavior, in order to deny the imagination's very existence. He passes off the imagination as if it were not imagined at all, as if it were not one mind's invention, as if it were actually the plain, literal truth. He writes as if his own mind were equipped with some hitherto unknown mechanism, as if it were a combination of camera and tape recorder, reproducing the scene exactly and transcribing what was said. Hence, between the knower and the known, the reader and the story, there exists no medium of communication, no barrier, no transparency, even, of art. Knowledge for the reader becomes direct, unfiltered, firsthand. You are there. This is a most extraordinary idea, and like other dodges to reconcile contradictions or do the impossible, it has proved extremely attractive. Generally we have all been affected by it.

Defoe's technique is very simple. Just as water runs downhill

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and heat rises, Defoe's writing seems to operate under its own power. Even while he makes the most extraordinary demands on his medium, using words to transform experience communicated in words into the real thing, he never appears to be a writer, just an author, for he writes as if no literary tradition exists, as if no one had ever put pen to paper or framed a sentence. Those big subjects, such as love, grief, time, death, which have perennially appealed to the literary imagination, teasing it to the limits of expression, mean nothing to him. He is completely indifferent to any special literary values, caring not in the least for the pleasures of language, for high flights, purple passages, rhetorical ornament, conventional embellishment, a well-turned phrase, grace. As a stylist he stolidly places the dullest, most ordinary words in the most obvious places.

Defoe acts the part of the writer who is barely able to form his letters. He is the great original of that by now well-known figure, the writer of novels who seems himself to be entirely speechless, unable to express with any complexity of language the thoughts and emotions of his imagined creations. He seems to be exerting some unheard-of negative power, so that he communicates directly with his reader by not saying, by not putting into words, by seeming to be inarticulate, tongue-tied, dumb. This is, in a new sense, an art to conceal art, and it is no more unconscious and naïve on the writer's part than is the use of the conjunctive *like* in a singing commercial or of *it's* (because the apostrophe does make it look like a possessive) for *its* in the gigantic letters of a roadside sign.

An attempt to state positively what Defoe does express reveals how little of the vast possibilities of human experience he puts into words. When we look at his dialogue, we find that Defoe writes out a few dark hints, certain whimperings and mutterings, an occasional clearly enunciated remark about money, and a great deal of utterly commonplace talk about physical objects. If we consider what passes for the author's reflections on the meaning of his imagined experience, we find nothing but the most childish moralizing. And as for the communication of emotion, this is, of all forms of experience, the easiest for the author to handle, because emotion,



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by common consent, is too large and overwhelming to be put into words by anybody, even by a professional writer. There is the unforgettable scene where Friday loyally obeys his master's orders, parleys with the hostile Indians, and is murdered. Defoe has no difficulty in creating Robinson Crusoe's experience at this painful moment. He says that Robinson's grief was "indescribable," and immediately goes on with his narrative, telling how many guns were fired in retaliation, what they were loaded with, the range and so on. The reader understands all there is to know about this scene, for, everyone agrees, intense emotion can never be put into words. In the world where Defoe flattens out whatever he touches, dulling all the edges of life, nearly everything is silence.

Yet, in this writing there is a kind of power, and it operates through a tone of voice. When we listen to it with concentrated attention, we almost feel that it is a particular person speaking, and although we are never able to place the name and face, we have heard many times these rhythms and intonations, going on endlessly as a background noise, by day and by night, speaking in an easy, continuous flow, as if in making vowel and consonant sounds there is involved neither friction nor muscular effort. It is like the voice on a neighbor's radio, fluent, persuasive, not distinct enough to be recognized and understood, but compelling attention. We hear it everywhere. It is the voice that tells us on the back of a pressurized can how to kill mosquitoes, flies and silverfish. It is the voice that makes reports and tells us how to fill out forms. On the commencement platform and booming over the public address system, it outlines a Six Point Program for increasing the number of students in science and engineering. On the editorial page, it goes on about juvenile delinquency and Soviet Russia. Or from high places, it warns us that if we do not preserve our precious spiritual values we shall pay for them in certain material ways, all described with gusto. Who is it that is speaking, please? We feel that we almost know.

By using this tone of voice Defoe transforms language—who would not like to do as much?—into truth. He narrates the history of a highwayman or a pirate or a courtesan or a shipwrecked mar-



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iner as straightforward autobiography, or he professes to be making a compilation from authentic documents as if he were a discreet ghost-writer or a serious historian. His interest is exclusively in recording the unadorned fact, the plain event. He puts into words everything, in all its dreariness, which is said: the physical, especially the bodily, movements; the exact place, locating it like the small boy on the flyleaf of his new arithmetic book, by number, street, precinct, ward, town, county, state, country; and the precise time, recorded in fractions of a second and corrected by the Naval Observatory quartz clock. The mind at work operates by total recall, except for these qualifications: it recalls what never happened, and it is not a mind.

Defoe's innovation, a style of writing which is neither a style nor writing but the simple truth, has proved almost overwhelmingly successful; and no wonder, for it satisfies a generally felt need, relaxes a widely shared uneasiness. It resolves an inner conflict which people have lived with a long time, the conflict between the pleasures of the imagination and the profound disapproval of all unreal fancies produced by the uncontrolled operations of the human mind. As if from the outside and authoritatively, Defoe removes all possible ground for objection by denying that anything is made up or invented. He provides a satisfying excuse for the notoriously time-wasting, distracting and corrupting pastime of reading a storybook.

After all, a certain amount of disapproval for just the ordinary act of reading is not entirely unreasonable. The exercise of letting the eyes move back and forth across the printed page is not necessarily a virtue, nor does it inevitably produce information, learning and wisdom. Mark Pattison, looking with harsh unforgiveness at his own youth and the time when there was, he says, nothing in him which could be called intelligence, when his childishness was astonishing, noticed that he was also much addicted to the habit of reading. He says, "I think the mechanical act of perusal must have given me a sort of pleasure." Anyone who has ever read with complete, yawning satisfaction the social notes in a newspaper of a strange town knows what is meant. Furthermore this time-consum-



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ing occupation is usually carried out in a seated or even a lying position. It looks lazy, and it certainly is nonproductive; yet everywhere the face of the earth must be reconstructed and people must be put in order. A large number of heavy objects must be moved from one place to another, and there are plenty of human situations on which the human will must be exerted with the powerful assistance of mechanical appliances. Then there are the weeds, incessantly growing, insects incredibly multiplying. Eternal vigilance must be the price of everything. Finally, there are the universal terrors of life, those uncertainties which paralyze thought and make us turn the pages of a book unheeding. "Time flies, death urges, knells call, Heav'n invites, / Hell threatens. . . ." No mortal man ought to be able to endure sitting alone in a room with a book. This last observation is intended as a commonplace.

Defoe made it possible for even the hardest head supported by the healthiest body to relax over a storybook, and with no trouble to the conscience. This has proved to be a contribution to the pleasures of life as well as a great boon to the printing trade. On his title page Defoe appeals to the reader who is both reluctant and eager. He suggests some of the excitements to be enjoyed, and then contradicts the commonly held opinion that this particular object, because of its size, shape and general appearance, is a gathering of printed matter called a book. No, he states flatly, this is the truth. This is life. Once this suggestion has been taken in and the cloth, glue, paper and printer's ink have been redefined, the reader can settle down with his book and feel entirely secure. He can repel any criticism, even his own.

Imagine a situation in which a reader caught in the act of reading is asked what it is he thinks he is doing anyway. If the reader has had the benefit of higher education and knows anything of the world, certain answers are immediately impossible for him. He would never dream of saying that just as other people like to make money or go fast or dominate their fellows he simply likes to read. No, he gives a serious answer which he expects will be entirely understood. He denies that he is reading. He asserts that he is learning about New York City during Prohibition, Chicago in the nine-



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ties, New Orleans in the Civil War, and a lot about social, political and economic ideas, too. If the attack is pursued and the reader is asked what profit he expects to find in reading a pack of lies about a lot of plainly unreal people engaged in various detestable activities, the reader can reply that all this appears to him exactly as it does in what is called real life. And he can counterattack by wondering sarcastically whether it is supposed that some special knowledge, some special attitude, is necessary to understand literature and life. For literature and life are all one to him.

With all candor, the reader confesses that he has actually caught himself thinking, thinking thoughts about himself and about other people. When he observes the behavior of those living human beings around him, he finds himself wondering about them, asking himself what they suppose they are about, where they are going at such an unusual hour, how they ever manage to live on their incomes, what makes them do something or other; these and similar questions he has also asked while reading a storybook. And he is ready to admit that he has drawn conclusions from his reading about his own life. Defoe, for example, has shown him that he does not want to grow up to become a pickpocket nor is there any future in being a horse thief. It is his considered opinion after reading *Moll Flanders,* who was among other things "five times a wife (whereof once to her brother)," that an incestuous marriage results in more complicated family relations than are convenient or desirable. And his reading has not been limited to Defoe. *Crime and Punishment* made him ask himself a lot of questions, although they are not very clear in his mind right now, and the Book of Job showed him that there is a good deal of trouble in the world. *Sister Carrie* made him form the general rule that it is not a good idea to rob your employer when you run away with a not very attractive woman—at least that is the way Carrie struck him. Without prolonging the record of his reading, he can sum up by saying that there seems to be injustice in the world, people make mistakes, human nature is much the same, and it is well to be careful. In such reflections as these, the thoughtful reader makes literature into what is called a meaningful experience.



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And in so doing the reader's position is absolutely secure. His competence cannot reasonably be called into question. Of course, he may be ignorant of art, but what of that? He does know about life! To this emphatic assertion, no possible reply can be made either politely or safely. Who would dare contradict? And on what grounds? The reader does know certain things about life. He is sure that it can be, should be, twisted and turned and used to his advantage. Before him appears the gigantic morality play of other people's existence, and in it he can always find useful lessons for his own purposes. The spectacle before him is one great whole, life and literature, literature and life. There is no difference between Napoleon the real man, Napoleon of Caulaincourt's *Diaries,* Napoleon of *War and Peace*; no difference between his friends and acquaintances, a person observed and commented upon, an imaginary character in a work of fiction. Everyone, real or imagined, dead or alive, stands before him as an actor in a play on a stage before an audience. In reading a novel about Mau Mau, in listening to the latest news broadcast, in reading the morning paper, he is in one and the same position. There, seated on the back of his neck, his heels higher than his head, his blood with its normal accumulation of self-administered poisons coursing languidly through his veins and arteries, he is able to think large thoughts and to express them quite as if he were himself one of those almost speechless characters in a much admired novel. He says to himself, "Conflict and cruelty and terrible acts of God and wonder drugs and love. Well, well. All the world's a stage, and all human behavior, everything that happens anywhere or is supposed to happen, serves as part of the drama of my life. I must learn from it all I can. When I have learned all there is, then I shall know." The feelings which accompany such reflections are not disagreeable, apparently.

The perfect technical device for reporting the facts of life without any possibility of interpretation is the camera, and inevitably the picture magazine provides the final form of literary experience. There is also the television screen. The camera, everybody knows, does not lie; and about any photograph of anything, one remark at least can be safely made, "It's true." In the presence of the flattened



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and bloody corpse, the racing car turning over in mid-air as it bursts into flames, Miss Universe, the political personage climbing out of an airplane and being greeted by a gang of lesser political personages, the reproduction in color of a genuine oil painting owned by a genuine Yale man (also photographed, though only in black and white), the reader knows exactly where he is and what he is doing. He is at ease with himself because he knows that what he sees before him is the fact. This is reality.

Such is Defoe's original impregnable position. Truth is the event as it happens, and for anyone who will take the trouble it is there to be seen. It stands before us, the pure, cellophane-wrapped fact, untouched by human minds, in no way altered or prepared or arranged by the necessities of the medium of communication, not in the least the product of art. It is, to use a generally recognized good word, *unslanted*. And since its elements are really related in a certain way and are as easily distinguishable as the parts of speech in a simple sentence, we are never in any doubt as to who the agents are, what they are doing, what is acted upon, where and when the event takes place. This self-evident clarity turns out to be profoundly moral: its heroes and villains are all plainly labeled. In this atmosphere where the visibility is always excellent, doubt, including any hesitation a reader might have about his own omnicompetence, is impossible. How can there be a problem of knowledge when it is assumed that the mind perceives what really happens in the exact form in which the event takes place? This is the truth before us. And to go on and question whether the truth finally appears to us as good, who would dare? No matter how vile the present manifestation, truth is good.

Although Defoe's achievement in thus relocating the place of the imagination by seeming to deny its very existence has not won him a position right up there with the Great Writers, we must all acknowledge his influence. Everyone at some moment in his reading is inclined to assert that this experience is really and truly not literary at all, but is life itself. To be sure, there is the book, arrangements of black on white, the medium of communication language; yet at this instant, physical form becomes immaterial and language



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does more, says more, than language can do or say. Everyone will think of his own examples of books which seem to work this miracle, and if they happen to be bumbling in their expression, so much the more wonderful it turns out to be. This is not a novel, we exclaim, but the dilemma of the South or the North, of Europe or Asia, of the political, the economic, the modern man.

It must be admitted that not all novels speak to us in this miraculous manner. Some still remain works of fiction, pieces of writing, with their coherent dialogue, their ordered sequence of events, their artfully contrived sentences, their considered effects. In this created world of the imagination, the boundaries of experience are so well marked that the author, the imagined persons, and the reader cannot easily be dissolved into one whirling blob of consciousness. The very fact that the author expresses his world as far as words will go makes it harder for the reader to put himself into the imagined event and supply meanings from the subterranean regions of his own self. Possibly he may even feel repelled and have to admit that under such and such circumstances he would not act that way or feel these emotions. At such moments when demands are made upon him to exert himself beyond the ordinary range of his own imagination, he finds himself unmistakably in the presence of a different, even a foreign, mind—the mind of the author.

As a consequence of this terrible admission, we may look back once more over the last couple of centuries to discover what is the role of the reader of fiction, what is his position in relation to the thing imagined. Then it may seem that the victory of Daniel Defoe, that straw-stuffed figure, turns out to be a defeat, and that one of the decisive battles of the world has really gone against us. Conjectures such as these make even the hardened, satisfied reader draw back and ask, "Can it be that other minds really exist?" At this question, the center of the universe trembles.



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# *If You Don't Mind My Saying So . . . . . .*

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

The New York *Nation* is the favorite magazine of those who prefer to view with alarm; the *Reader's Digest*, of those who decidedly do not. If you call the attention of the former to something which looks like an ointment for our troubled times, the editors will find a horsefly in it. If the latter periodical does acknowledge the existence of dark clouds, then a dazzling ray of sunshine is sure to break through.

Recent issues of both magazines appearing almost simultaneously gave impressive demonstrations of what each can do in its line. Rather surprisingly the *Digest* permitted itself to suggest that Madison Avenue's new experiments in "depth psychology" have an ominous aspect; but it quickly removed the threat to the distant future and came up with the reassuring statement that "most of the persuaders of 1957 are likeable, earnest men who just want . . . to maneuver us into buying something we may actually need." Even giving due weight to the "may," this strikes me as a very impressive example of the sharp eye for silver linings. But the *Nation*'s editorial which viewed with alarm a recent tribute to autumn leaves in the *Herald Tribune* arouses even deeper admiration.

Most newspapers, as the *Nation* admits, occasionally go in for this sort of thing. It is usually, so the writer says, the work of some old retainer with a gift for whimsey. There is also a superstition that the public loves it. But even the bourgeois public is not really *that* stupid. The real reason why an editor fills with such stuff the space he might give to comment on some current outrage is that if he did not he "might otherwise have to take an awkward stand." Still, as the *Nation* has just demonstrated, even a stand in favor of autumn leaves can provoke a vehement attack, and there are no safe subjects.

Thoreau appointed himself inspector of autumn leaves as well as of snowstorms, and even the *Nation* would have to admit that he did quite a bit of crusading too. Shelley, good revolutionist though he was, proclaimed: "Many green islands there must be / In the wide sea of misery." But the *Nation* doesn't think we should waste time visiting any of them. Presumably it agrees with a character in one of Arthur Koestler's novels who remarks that "in an age of transition no one has a right to be happy." And I suppose even leaves ought to die grubbily instead of gloriously. If they do not, we should at least have achieved sufficient social maturity to decently avert our eyes. They may be "brave even in the infamy of their nature," but we shouldn't.

Many years ago, while I was still a *Nation* employee, I was sitting next to Arthur Train at dinner when the policies of that magazine came under discussion. "By the way," he asked, "what are *your* political opinions?" "Some of my colleagues," I replied, "think I am a rank reactionary." Mr. Train looked thoughtful for a moment and far from reassured. "Well," he said at last, "that still leaves a good deal of latitude."

I must confess that as a member of the traditionally irresponsible literary section, I was never treated to anything worse than a sad shaking of the head when I gave a thought to autumn leaves or even more unworthy subjects. Nevertheless, the father image still haunts me. Did I, for example, "have a right" to spend three weeks last summer on the north rim of the Grand Canyon? Was I wickedly trying to be happy



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in an age of transition? Were the attempts I occasionally made to relate nature to human nature a sufficient justification? For that matter, were the conclusions I came up with so backward- rather than forward-looking that it would have been less blameworthy to be an escapist? I can only let any readers as may follow me further pass their own doubtless divergent judgments.

One of the conclusions was suggested by a conversation with park rangers, who told me that they often overhear visitors offering one another all the improbable explanations ever given in the past to account for the improbable phenomenon—a river meandering like a lazy brook through a gash cut a mile deep into the center of a great dome of rock which, so it seems, any sensible river would have flowed around. But a new theory, never thought of before, has recently been turning up quite frequently, and it is usually introduced by some such statement as "You can't tell me this was done without human aid."

One visitor who asked if the Canyon had been a WPA project was no doubt only a satirical rogue. But most of the others are quite serious. And this is what, in my own small way, I view with alarm. Behind such a suggestion must lie the unconscious assumption that man's works are by now the most imposing on earth and that his power exceeds nature's. No age before this would have made such an assumption. Heretofore man has always thought of himself as puny by comparison with natural forces, and he was humble before them. But we have been so impressed by the achievements of technology that we are likely to think we can do more than nature herself. We dug the Panama Canal, didn't we? Why not the Grand Canyon?

Even if this estimate of our powers were accurate it would still be in its own way alarming enough. But of course the estimate is grossly wrong—a delusion of grandeur producing a state of *hubris* which may bring about a tragic catastrophe in the end. Mountains are still a great deal more massive than skyscrapers. And, as guides have often pointed out, if the Empire State Building had been built at the river, its summit would be just barely visible from the rim as it peeped above the edge of the inner gorge some four thousand feet below. Boulder Dam proudly boasts that it is "highest in the world"; but when I discovered how insignificant a feature of the landscape it was when seen from the air, I was inspired to make another comparison. The Panama Canal is, I suppose, the most grandiose of man's attempts to rival nature as a shaper and molder of the face of the earth. My encyclopedia tells me that digging it involved moving something like 450 million cubic yards of dirt and stone. But the Colorado River moves on an average about 170 million cubic yards every year. Every three years, in other words, it does a job equal to the building of the Canal. And it has been working, so the geologists say, for somewhere between one million and seven million years.

But I cannot imagine how we are going to be cured of *hubris* if the only effect of coming face to face with one of the most impressive demonstrations of what nature can do is to intensify the delusion that she has been outdone as well as conquered. When a man had accomplished an unusually impressive task it used to be said that "he must have had God's help." Nowadays we are more likely to assume, as the visitors to the Canyon do, that He needs ours. Six whole days to make the world? Why a competent engineering firm could have done it in two. Stop all work for a day of rest? With two shifts you can give everybody two days off without interrupting for even one hour the progress of Progress.

In a small plane one may circle low over Boulder Dam and then, only a few minutes later, over Havasu Canyon to the east, where a very small tribe of well isolated Indians cultivates an abundantly watered plateau about two thousand feet below the rim. They were there and in approximately the same number when Father Garces, the first white man ever to see them, stopped by in 1776; since then their way of life has



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changed extremely little. Boulder Dam represents our adjustment to nature, Havasu Canyon a different one. And just what moral is to be drawn from the paradox of an unprogressive civilization being next door to a very progressive one I am not quite sure, though I am sure that the Havasu village looks as though it belonged where it is while the dam is an obvious excrescence.

Unlike the rest of us Americans, the Havasupai have not "conquered nature" or even "controlled it." They have aspired to no more than the ability to live with it, and this has meant so little transformation that from the air one might have difficulty in deciding whether their oasis was man-made or only an unusually large natural one like a dozen others. They left and they would have continued to leave to the ravens and the eagles the air through which we were nonchalantly flying. They would never have multiplied until only control and conquest could force nature to support them.

They have few of our comforts and little or nothing of our artistic or intellectual culture. The men tan deerskins; the women weave baskets. Their religion and their ceremonies are fewer and simpler than those of many other Indian tribes. They treat disease by singing instead of with antibiotics, and I suppose that their average life span is shorter. Yet their community seems to belong where it is. It is a blessing, not a blot on the landscape—which cannot be said of many communities created by more advanced civilizations.

Man has created some beautiful things—sculptures, paintings, vases and, occasionally, a building. But such beautiful things are few by comparison with the ugliness he is responsible for, and I do not see how anyone could dispute the statement that the physical world he has taken over is less good to look at because of him or that it grows less and less so from day to day. Most people would, I suppose, maintain that this isn't, after all, so very important. But from an airplane one gets a very detached view. And if Ernest Renan was right in his guess that "the universe is a spectacle which the good God created for his own entertainment," then I am inclined to think He must regard us as having detracted from rather than added to it. What does He think of the neon light? Not even the beer can has contributed so much to making this an uglier world to live in. And, for once, it was a Frenchman, not an American, who invented this screaming horror.

As for man's entertainment rather than God's, that is a different matter and depends upon taste. Even questions of necessity or utility aside, there are still many to whom Lake Mead is an improvement of the landscape from every point of view. What strikes me as the banality of its tidy shore, its speedboats and its aquaplaning bathing beauties is to them more beautiful as well as more entertaining than the natural grandeur of the Canyon or the modest man-made charm of the Havasupai's oasis. It provides "a recreational area"; and to those incapable of awe, intellectual curiosity or aesthetic appreciation, "recreation" is the only nonutilitarian activity which has any meaning. That all recreation areas are pretty much alike, that swimming behind Boulder Dam is much like swimming behind any other dam, and that every landscape is much like every other once it has been thoroughly "improved," doesn't matter. The fact that at Boulder the slot machines of Las Vegas are within easy reach is to them uniqueness enough.

I certainly do not want to live with the Havasupai. They may be happier than the average American, but I am certainly not ready to assert that they are. But I doubt that we are as much happier as the differences in health, security, comfort, convenience and release from physical pain ought to make us, and I can't help wondering why. Yet it is only still more of the same that the prophets of the great age to come usually promise us.

The more intellectual utopians talk in general terms of greater per capita wealth, less poverty, less manual work and faster means of communication. Those who write the popular articles published over and over again in the periodicals which exist



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chiefly to make readers dissatisfied with their current refrigerator or automobile usually go into more detail. By 1980, they say, you will be broiling steaks in electronic stoves, owning a two-helicopter garage and, of course, looking at television in full color. These assurances are supposed to make it easier for the housewife to put up with mere electric ovens, ninety-mile-an-hour automobiles and soap operas in black and white. From such makeshifts they are supposed to lift sparkling eyes toward a happier future. And that is precisely what they do. Will they be as much happier as they now think they inevitably must be? Is what they are promised what they really want? Is it the lack of the things soon to come which is chiefly responsible for the irritations, frustrations and discontents they now feel?

Suppose they were promised instead that by 1980 the world in which they live would be less crowded, less noisy, less hurried and even less complicated. Suppose they were told that they would have more opportunities to see the beauties and taste the pleasures of sea and mountain and stream, to have more contact with the wonders of trees and flowers, with the abounding life of animal creatures other than human. Would the prospect look to them even brighter? Frankly, I doubt it. But that does not entirely convince me that such a world would not, in actual fact, make for more happiness than the one they are promised.

In any case, what they are promised is what they are probably going to get, at least unless, as the gloomy prophets predict, they will get some world calamity instead. Even those who would prefer an opportunity to choose a simpler, more natural life are not likely to get it. There may be cable cars and swimming pools in Grand Canyon yet.

In what is probably the worst poem ever written by any genuine poet, Wordsworth describes the sad state of a country girl, imprisoned in London, who gets her only consolation from the contemplation of a stuffed owl. The nature lovers of a few generations hence may all be reduced to a similar state.

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## *Home*

Years in the field
Could never yield
Bloom from the stone
Of living alone.

His lesson learned
Grandfather turned
Townward to share
Perpetual care.

——EDWARD KESSLER



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# CONtroversy

John W. Ward has performed a true scholar's service in his "reappraisal" of James Gould Cozzens [AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Winter, 1957-1958]. No one, to my knowledge, has explained so well the reasons for the earlier neglect of the novelist or for the sudden rush of admirers, more recently, in his direction. Mr. Ward thinks that the reading public's change of heart may signify a profound change in the intellectual climate of this country, that hitherto "the American mind was not in a state to appreciate Cozzens," but that now we have come to recognize in his novels a new kind of hero—perhaps the very sort of ideal man demanded by the conditions of modern life. Needless to say, this argument has nothing much to do with the literary merits of *By Love Possessed.* It is essentially a historical or, in the broadest sense of the word, a political hypothesis. It cannot be verified. But I do wish that Mr. Ward had gone on to evaluate the change he describes. At this point in history, is admiration for the Cozzens philosophy a good sign? Precisely what does it mean? Mr. Ward, whose tone throughout is highly affirmative, seems to be saying that the current vogue of Cozzens is a measure of our new maturity. But is it? I suspect that it may be an expression of something quite different. Isn't it in many ways akin to the apathy and moral resignation that is manifest in the political life of Eisenhower America?

What sort of man is the Cozzens hero? Like Abner Coates, in *The Just and the Unjust,* he often is a man who learns "to discard his youthful protest against the distance between the way things should be and the way things are." This is Mr. Ward's characterization, and I agree that it identifies a cardinal virtue in the fictional world of James Gould Cozzens. We are told that the novelist regards the idea of rebellion against society as callow, and the idea of reforming society as naïve. His most appealing characters have a way of making acquiescence seem heroic. They learn—and often their recognition of this fact is a climactic moment—that they must put principles aside and accept *what is* with "skeptical and ironic good sense." This seems to me a code not easy to distinguish from other more popular if less sophisticated codes of passive life-adjustment. One hesitates to say this because Cozzens is a serious writer who respects the mind, and whose work cannot be classed with run-of-the-mill best sellers. And yet, consider his suspicion of the visionary, the idealist or radical—anyone, indeed, who is too concerned with the way things *might be*—and then consider how this same man is regarded in the new-rich suburbs, among the ranch-style dwellers and Edsel drivers. How are we to define the difference? I see no place in either world for a man inclined to stand up and say NO! to what is.

One reason for this heroic quietism becomes apparent when we turn to the image of society in Cozzens' fiction. In most of his novels the action is confined to a clear-cut institutional or professional setting. His people inhabit semi-autonomous worlds where, to be sure, they confront complicated moral problems. The more reflective among them abstract a general moral philosophy from their immediate experiences. But in their speculations upon society they suffer a curious short-circuiting of awareness that distinguishes them from, for example, characters in the social novels of Joseph Conrad or Henry James. The reason for this, I believe, is that Cozzens often makes them aware of the complexities of society but rarely of history. Beyond the immediate setting, the town, the ship, the army camp, the legal profession and so on, there are few comprehensible events. Although each institutional wheel revolves, and they all may



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be geared to each other in some imperfect way, no one has a clue about the direction in which the larger machine is moving. "Mere living," says Mr. Ward, "can be a heroic enterprise in Cozzens' fiction because it involves man in a historical and social web he can neither control nor renounce." Given this model of existence it is hardly surprising that aspirations and ideals have come to seem "somewhat embarrassing, if not a little absurd."

Mr. Ward's argument, I repeat, is historical, not literary. With admirable clarity, he has indicated certain affinities between the work of Cozzens and the present climate of opinion in America. At the same time he warns against a political reading of his essay: "One need not be a member of the landed gentry or a Republican, of course, to appreciate Cozzens' view of the condition of man." True enough. And yet one cannot ignore how nicely Cozzens' "illiberal" political allegiances fit into his general conception of things. His "cause," says Mr. Ward, is that of a "skeptical conservative who does not think too much can be done with the way things are." Who could ask for a better description of the dominant state of mind in America today?

But is such quietism a mark of maturity? That depends, of course, on how one estimates "the way things are." Obviously this is an ideal posture for a people chiefly concerned to protect what it already has. But if one believes that a perpetuation of the way things are in 1958 may well be catastrophic, then it is anything but mature. On the contrary, it seems to sanction a regression, a dangerous withdrawal from the realities of historical change. Indeed, it then takes on that quality of cold, self-defeating shortsightedness of which so many Europeans already accuse us.

LEO MARX
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Otto Friedrich's "reappraisal" of Hemingway in your Autumn, 1957, issue is one of the most provocative and provoking essays on Hemingway I have ever read. In his article Mr. Friedrich indeed makes some telling hits. For example, not even the most ardent Hemingway fans—and I am one of them—could offer an effective rebuttal to the charge that Hemingway's heroines, with the possible exception of Brett Ashley, are nothing beyond the embodiment of male fantasy in their sexual ability, eagerness and subservience. What does provoke me in Mr. Friedrich's beautifully written and deeply informed discussion is his basic assumption that Hemingway is a minor writer with some great virtues rather than a major writer with some great flaws.

Let's be honest and admit Hemingway's faults. He is often obsessed with and by violence. He tends to make death a fetish. His characters often retreat into monosyllabic stoicism. He has been guilty of political and philosophical naïveté or, even worse, nihilism. He has too often tried to live his own legend, both in his public utterances and his writing. He has too often ventured into literary criticism, with vulgarity and poor taste too often the result. He has even used his writing to settle personal scores. In fact, for a whole decade, between *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, he wrote no *major* work of fiction, only a few short stories of permanent value and, beyond a couple of articles in which he shrewdly predicted the beginning of a new war and several magnificent passages of expository prose in *Death in the Afternoon* and *The Green Hills of Africa*, not much else. I cannot seriously consider *To Have and Have Not* a major work, and I really cannot understand Mr. Friedrich's admiration for it. It is a more sincere book than *Across the River and into the Trees*, but it is also a very confused book which clearly shows its indebtedness to the series of short stories which it was intended to be and to the nascent Marxism which Hemingway got in Spain in the middle 1930's before coming back to America long enough to revise the stories into a novel. Surely, of all Hemingway's books, none has more of the senseless



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violence and sex that Mr. Friedrich deplores than *To Have and Have Not*. Nor can we take the Marxism in it very seriously when all the capitalists in the book are so utterly corrupt and all the Communists are lined up at the bar, drinking.

But on to the more serious crimes in Mr. Friedrich's indictment of Hemingway. There are basically two things of which Mr. Friedrich has accused the writer, although the charges are restated in several different ways: superficiality ("meaningless worldliness") and unreality ("fantasy"). Now these are precisely the shortcomings which Hemingway's hostile critics have always found in his work. Attacks on Hemingway for his hostility to intellectuality, his overemphasis on manliness (Max Eastman gave it classic expression—"wearing false hair on the chest"), his creation of character-primitives, et cetera, are actually only separate counts of the two major indictments Mr. Friedrich states. However—and here is where the evidence in Hemingway's *whole* career refutes his separate crimes—few writers in our time have shown the philosophical and artistic development that is apparent in Hemingway between *In Our Time* and *The Old Man and the Sea*.

At first, Hemingway's emphasis on courage, honor, and the integrity of work were a part of a nihilistic hedonism, a rejection of society, a retreat into stoicism as the only *modus vivendi* in a chaotic world. Then, in the middle 1930's, beginning with the amateur Marxism in *To Have and Have Not*, Hemingway began to come back. The uncertain and confused statement of salvation through collectivism broadened in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and became a positive and explicit avowal of human solidarity, brotherhood and worth. In short, with that novel Hemingway demonstrated that in him idealism had been reborn. Finally, after the unhappy episode of *Across the River and into the Trees*, in which Hemingway posed as military expert, the old themes were restated and re-emphasized in *The Old Man and the Sea*, but with new dignity and meaning. In that story the old man says, just after he fights off the first shark which attacks his great, conquered marlin, "Man is not made for defeat. . . . A man can be destroyed but not defeated." Is this an example of the pointless pessimism which Mr. Friedrich finds so distasteful?

Because Hemingway believes that basic values can be seen only in basic situations, he has concentrated on violence, death, physical love, activity and human beings with the veneer stripped off. I don't especially believe that violent living is true living, but I hesitate to refute a position which has had so much support from so many in the past. In other words, I don't agree with Hemingway on this point, but because I do not does not make Hemingway automatically stupid or mentally incompetent or undeveloped; yet this is exactly the presumption that Mr. Friedrich makes and that the critics who have accused Hemingway of mental incompetence have always made. Hemingway reads books. When he writes, he does so in competition with the great writers of the past. Robert Jordan, one of Hemingway's heroes and one of the most credible heroes in modern fiction, is an intellectual. Hemingway does not hate intellectuals. He simply does not believe that intellectualism is the answer—at least not until, as with Robert Jordan, it is wedded with action. To Hemingway, intellectualism is too often a front for ineffectuality, phoniness; that's why he has always avoided literary society; that's why he once accused writers who stayed in big cities near their publishers of being like worms in a bottle.

As for Hemingway's "fantasy," how can we accuse of fantasy a man who has lived so much of what he has written? Few writers in our time or any other have been so close to their material, have seen so much of it at firsthand. Hemingway has become a legend because he has lived a legendary life. I suspect that readers and critics have resented this in him, just as many women resent his portrayal of women. Hemingway's great weakness, in fact, is that he has too often written of what he has not lived. For example, instead of putting Colonel Cantwell in Italy, making love in gondolas, he should have put him in France with the Maquis, greeting the Allied forces as they rolled into Paris (as Hemingway did). I am not saying



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that a writer must experience something to make great fiction from it; but in Hemingway's case, at least, his own real experience has been at the root of every worth-while thing he has written, experience transformed, of course, by creative imagination.

Finally, I suspect that Mr. Friedrich's resentment of Hemingway is directed, or should be directed, rather at the whole hard-boiled and hard-bitten school of modern fiction which Hemingway is generally credited with founding. True, Hemingway has had perhaps more influence on young writers than anyone else, but that is hardly Hemingway's fault. Greatness always attracts imitation, and one good test of Hemingway's own greatness is his host of imitators. He is one of the rare artists in our time who have gained both critical respect and a mass audience. Why? Because he can be read on different levels, because the critic finds depth where the casual reader finds clarity. Could a man of so little mind as Hemingway has been accused of having create a body of work which could supply the material for hundreds of just such searching analyses as Mr. Friedrich's? Where there is no substance, no artistry, no reality, could there be the basis for a Nobel Prize? Or was the prize awarded for the "few" stories which Mr. Friedrich finds praiseworthy? No, Mr. Friedrich's underestimation of Hemingway is based on the same misunderstanding and hostility which kept Hemingway from getting the Nobel Prize far earlier; and the award of the prize is indicative, I think, of the clearsightedness and appreciation with which the critics have lately begun to see Hemingway.

I have read everything of Hemingway's in print, and much of it more than once. Each time I come back to Hemingway in *The Sun Also Rises, A Farewell to Arms, For Whom the Bell Tolls, The Old Man and the Sea,* and in any one of a dozen superb stories, I find something new, something richer than before. I believe Hemingway is more than "one of the best writers of his generation." He is either a great writer of fiction, a writer whose work has permanent value, or he is one of the greatest frauds of all time.

SHELDON GREBSTEIN
University of Kentucky



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# ..... *The Revolving Bookstand* .....

## Paw Marks and Buried Towns

LOREN EISELEY

Many years ago, when the first cement sidewalks were being built in our neighborhood, we children took the paw of our dog Mickey and impressed it into a kind of immortality even as he modestly floundered and objected. This past summer, after the lapse of many decades, I stood and looked at the slab, now crumbling at the edges from the feet of many passers.

No one knows where Mickey the friendly lies; no one knows how many times the dust that clothed that beautiful and loving spirit has moved with the thistledown across the yards where Mickey used to play. Here is his only legacy to the future—that dabbled paw mark whose secret is remembered briefly in the heart of an aging professor. The mark of Mickey's paw is dearer to me than many more impressive monuments—perhaps because, in a sense, we both wanted to be something other than what we were. Mickey, I know, wanted very much to be a genuine human being. If permitted, he would sit up to the table and put his paws together before his plate, like the rest of the children. If anyone mocked him at such a time by pretending to have paws and resting his chin on the table as Mickey had to do, Mickey would growl and lift his lip. He knew very well he was being mocked for not being a man.

This reminder that he was only a poor dog with paws annoyed Mickey. He knew basically a lot more than he ever had the opportunity to express. Though people refused to take Mickey's ambition seriously, the frustration never affected his temperament. Being of a philosophic cast of mind, he knew that children were less severe in their classifications. And if Mickey found the social restrictions too onerous to enable him quite to achieve recognition inside the house, outside he came very close to being a small boy. In fact, he was taken into a secret order we had founded whose clubhouse was an old piano box in the back yard. We children never let the fact that Mickey walked on four legs blind us to his other virtues.

Now the moral of all this is that Mickey tried hard to be a human being. And as I stood after the lapse of years and looked at the faint impression of his paw, it struck me that every ruined civilization is, in a sense, the mark of men trying to be human, trying to transcend themselves. Like Mickey, none of them have quite made it, but they have each left a figurative paw mark—the Shang bronzes, the dreaming stone faces on Easter Island, the Parthenon, the Sphinx, or perhaps only rusted stilettos, chain mail, or a dolmen on some sea-pounded headland. The archaeologist, it is said, is a student of the artifact. That harsh, unlovely word, as sharply angled as a fist ax or a brick, denudes us of human sympathy. In the eye of the public we loom, I suppose, as slightly befuddled graybeards scavenging in gravel heaps. We caw like crows over a bit of jade or a broken potsherd; we are eternally associated in the public mind with sharp-

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LOREN EISELEY is chairman of the department of anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. Author of *The Immense Journey*, he has written extensively for scientific and literary periodicals on human evolution and related subjects of natural history. Mr. Eiseley is a new member of the Editorial Board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.



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edged flints and broken statues. The utter uselessness of the past is somehow magnificently incorporated into our activities.

No one, I suppose, would believe that an archaeologist is a man who knows where last year's lace valentines have gone, or that from the surface of rubbish heaps the thin and ghostly essence of things human keeps rising through the centuries until the plaintive murmur of dead men and women may take precedence at times over the living voice. A man who has once looked with the archaeological eye will never see quite normally. He will be wounded by what other men call trifles. It is possible to refine the sense of time until an old shoe in the bunch grass or a pile of nineteenth-century beer bottles in an abandoned mining town toll in one's head like a hall clock. This is the price one pays for learning to read time from surfaces other than an illuminated dial. It is the melancholy secret of the artifact, the humanly touched thing.

This past year, although the successful Russian satellites swung everyone's attention to outer space, a surprising number of archaeological books dealing with the lost city civilizations were published. The rapidity of their appearance and the avidity with which they were received suggest that while the public's eye has been forced upward it has also, in the same act, been cast downward toward the earth. Perhaps no great civilization has ever before been more self-consciously aware of the possible doom that confronts it, or more curious about those brother thinkers and artists who carved the gods that lie now in temples visited by rain, or who ventured through the Pillars of Hercules when all beyond was wild and unknown as outer space today. They built in their separate ways, then fell, and we, with one winged foot poised toward the stars, hear in a preternatural quiet the old voices out of the grass. Whatever the disease that ate the heart of these lost cultures it was not the affliction of ignorance—not, at least, the technical ignorance of the savage who cannot lay one stone successfully upon another. In every one of these fallen cities which our spades have revealed, there existed the clever artisan, the engineer devoted to the service of the particular human dream that flourished there.

Here is Cottrell's description of the Ceylonese city of Annadhapura, known to be roughly contemporaneous, in the West, with the conquests of Alexander the Great:

> . . . the palaces . . . would have made Diocletian's palace seem a poor thing by comparison; their great *dagobas,* artificial hills of masonry supporting shrines and reliquaries, were sometimes over three hundred feet high, and can be compared with the pyramids of Egypt. Their hydraulic engineering has no parallel save in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; for example, the artificial lake of Mineria, created in the third century A.D. by Maha Sen, has a circumference of twenty miles, and the masonry and earthwork dams which were made to divert the waters of the stream which fills it extend for eighty miles; their average height is eighty feet.

Today, in the ruined tanks of those great Sinhalese cities, the bear alone stands upright, and leopards drink from the few puddles that remain. The cunning workers in stone and gold have long since departed.

Given time enough, this is a state of affairs more the rule than the exception among the cities of men, as the volumes of Leonard Cottrell,[1] Cyrus Gordon,[2] Zakaria Goneim,[3] J. Alden Mason,[4] Otto Neubert,[5] Kenneth Mathews,[6] Hermann and Georg Schreiber[7] amply reveal. The works run some range in their intentions. Three are by professional scholars of distinction, two of whom have aimed their books at the cultivated general public. Two others, in addition, have been contributed from the field of scientific journalism; and the sixth, *Cities*

1. *Lost Cities* by Leonard Cottrell. Rinehart, 1957.

2. *Adventures in the Nearest East* by Cyrus H. Gordon. Essential Books, 1957.

3. *The Lost Pyramid* by M. Zakaria Goneim. Rinehart, 1956.

4. *The Ancient Civilizations of Peru* by J. Alden Mason. Penguin Books, 1957.

5. *The Valley of the Kings* by Otto Neubert. Robert Hale, 1957.

6. *Cities in the Sand,* text by Kenneth Mathews and photographs by Alfred W. Cook. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957.

7. *Vanished Cities* by Hermann and Georg Schreiber. Knopf, 1957.



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*in the Sand*, is primarily a photographic study of the Roman cities of Leptis Magna and Sabratha in North Africa. All are ably done, whether sweeping over a wide range of the world's lost cities, as in the case of the Schreibers' volume, or concentrating upon a single region, or even the search for a single pyramid, as in the *Lost Pyramid* of Inspector Goneim.

The story of Goneim's excavation, ending in the presence of a mysterious alabaster coffin of an unknown third dynasty Pharaoh, is a peculiarly fascinating one. The coffin he discovered proved to be totally empty, although a wreath had been laid upon it before it was left in the darkness of its burial vault almost five thousand years ago. The evidence did not suggest the usual tomb robbery, but rather some bit of human drama lost forever in the darkness that shrouds the history of the Old Kingdom. Dr. Goneim, moreover, is not ashamed to acknowledge the feelings of which I have earlier spoken—the increasing sensitivity of the archaeologist to the voices from the ground:

> No one who has not crawled along the galleries beneath a pyramid, and experienced the silence and darkness, can fully appreciate the sensation which, at times, overwhelms one. It may sound fantastic, but I felt that the pyramid had a personality and that this personality was that of the king for whom it was built and which still lingered within it. I know that my workmen, some of whom have spent their whole lives in such work, often experience this feeling. You crawl along some dark corridor on hands and knees, past falls of rock; the light of the lamp gleams on minute crystals in the stratified walls; beyond, the corridor disappears into the blackness. You turn corners, feeling your way with your hands; the workmen have been left behind, and suddenly you realize you are alone in a place which has not heard a footfall for nearly fifty centuries.

After this, the reader vicariously devoted to archaeological adventure is only too eager to wander with Cottrell among the lost cities and buried libraries of Babylonia or to follow Neubert's spirited account of ancient Egypt, including the still fascinating, though often-told story, of the Tutankhamen discovery. Perhaps, in the end, part of the pathos which that episode holds for us rests in the youth of that young king interred in April, left with a wreath of cornflowers on his breast, to lie alone for three thousand years encased in solid gold.

In the wide-ranging *Vanished Cities* of Hermann and Georg Schreiber one may experience the sudden disintegration of an Etruscan warrior upon the opening of his sarcophagus "so that around the torches a golden powder seemed to be hovering"; or one may examine cities like Pompeii, destroyed by the elements, or cities stricken down by war or cities ruined by the vagaries of trade. Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, whose writing no man can read, pass to their violent end by conquest. Today the carefully laid out cities lie in a waste of sand.

Dr. Gordon, in his pleasant and good-humored book *Adventures in the Nearest East*, does not confine himself to archaeology. As a professional philologist able to read the ancient scripts of his area, he passes from accounts of digging and the camp life of the field archaeologist to a discussion of the Ugaritic writing first discovered in 1929. Most of the tablets have now been pretty well deciphered. They reveal the doings of the North Syrian gods around 1500 B.C. These gods, as might be suspected, are a suspiciously human lot. Drinking, loving, fighting—we see projected against the sky the faults and virtues of Adamic man. There is a chapter devoted to the Dead Sea Scrolls, the first major archaeological discovery bearing on the New Testament. Dr. Gordon points out that besides the intrinsic interest of the scrolls themselves, their discovery has elicited from scholarly religious specialists long known but little publicized facts bearing upon Judaeo-Christian history. He also ventures briefly among the Copts and spares a word for Babylonian demons. In short, Dr. Gordon reveals himself as a man of patience with a gentle tolerance toward human folly.

*Ancient Civilizations of Peru*, by Dr. Mason, sets out to give a careful, sustained scholarly treatment of the rise of the great Peruvian cultures which culminated in the Inca state. It is less anecdotal and breezy



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than the popular books we have been discussing, but it is intended for more sober purposes. Dr. Mason is an anthropologist of note, and his grasp of the far-scattered literature of his subject is tremendous. Throughout the whole Peruvian archaeological history of perhaps five thousand years known at present, Dr. Mason moves with care, precision and objectivity. I know of no recent book on Peru which is so moderate in size and which presents as ably the salient features of one of the great American civilizations—a civilization also noted, by the way, for its remarkable feats of practical engineering. This is an ideal handbook for the man who wishes to gain in a single volume more than a dilettante's impression of a region which was one of the world's great centers of plant domestication and which, among many other contributions, gave to the world the "Irish" potato.

*Cities in the Sand*, as we have previously intimated, is primarily a photographic study of two ancient Roman towns on the coast of Libya, prefaced by an excellent fifty-four-page historical introduction by Kenneth Mathews. It is in these photographs that we come back once more to what I spoke of as the artifact, the humanly touched thing. Here, in a series of clear, sunlit pictures, the remnants of a civilization once as powerful as our own are seen dissolving under sand and wind. From Libya there came the vast quantities of wheat and olive oil that nourished metropolitan Rome. Now the theaters lie empty and open to the sun, and the baths are waterless; but still the bold Roman letters stand across the entrance to the theater at Leptis Magna naming, amid the surrounding ruin, one Annobal, the donor. The columns totter; Annobal has left a paw mark and gone thence like my dog Mickey. It is the immediacy, across the waste of centuries, that catches the heart—the sculptured head that might have just been finished in a modern studio, the empty seats vacated by a crowd that has just left but is not coming back. As I study the pictures there comes into my mind a feeling I once experienced when examining a remarkable Victorian photograph of a girl asleep on a London park bench. She was poor, her shoes were scuffed, her young body ill at ease in its graceless Victorian garment. There was despair and beauty in her face—so much beauty that it was like looking through a little window in time and wanting to reach out and touch her shoulder in compassion. It was a photograph, I realized with difficulty, and I was glancing for one unrelieved instant upon a drama ended before I was born, a drama and a human soul upon whom I would never look again. Where she went upon the evening of that day a century ago or what darkness swallowed her up, it would never be mine to know. Now, looking upon the ruined Roman theater, it comes to me that not even the shadow of a shadow remains of the good citizen Annobal. Even worse, the roofs of the town he loved, and to whose arts he contributed, lie open to the stars.

I said earlier that the ruins of every civilization are the marks of men trying to express themselves, to leave an impression upon the earth. We in the modern world have turned more stones, listened to more buried voices than any culture before us. There should be a kind of pity that comes with time, when one grows truly conscious and looks behind as well as forward, for nothing is more brutally savage than the man who is not aware he is a shadow. Nothing is more real than the real; and that is why it is well for men to hurt themselves with the past—it is one road to tolerance.

The long history of man, besides its ennobling features, contains also a disrupting malice which continues into the present. Since the rise of the first neolithic cultures, as these volumes well reveal, man has hanged, tortured, burned and impaled his fellow men. He has done so while devoutly professing religions whose founders enjoined the very opposite upon their followers. It is as though we carried with us, from some dark tree in a vanished forest, an insatiable thirst for cruelty. Of all the wounds man's bodily organization has suffered in his achievement of a thinking brain, this wound is the most grievous of all, this shadow of madness, which has haunted every human advance since the dawn of history and which may well precipitate the final



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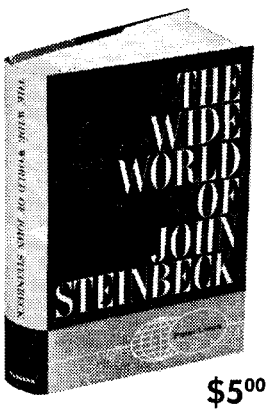


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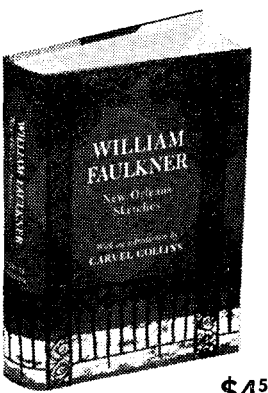


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episode in the existence of his race.

Not many months ago I chanced to be lecturing at a university whose grounds adjoin a depressed area of slums. After the conclusion of the class hour I sauntered out into a courtyard filled with sunshine and some fragments of Greek statuary. As I passed by the inner gate I was confronted by a scene as old as time. Approaching me along the path upon which they had intruded by squirming through a hedge, was a ragged band of children led by a sharp-featured boy with a bow and an arrow pointed with tin, which he held drawn. Instinctively we both paused—I because I feared for my eyes. There was no more human recognition in the face of the leader than I might have received from a group of hunting man-apes on the African savanna. We measured each other as mutually powerful and unknown forces, best to be avoided. The band drew in unconsciously about its leader and veered aside, with that wide, momentary animal stare haunting me as they passed. For there marched a million years of human history before my eyes, and I was a stranger and afraid although, in my own lifetime, I had made that formidable passage from the caves and sewers of my childhood to this deceptively quiet campus across which these ghosts of long ago now persisted in passing. There was no humor in them, no real play. They slunk on, cruel as man's past, deadly, with the bow poised and the sharp, observant eyes alert to spy out any helpless thing.

I sighed with relief as they clambered over an embankment and disappeared. On a nearby bench with my books spread out before me I did not read. "Man will survive," I said to myself, touched with a slight horror. "God should pity the world. Man will survive." All that passionate energy which in my own life, after many stumblings, had lodged me in these great silent halls, suddenly seemed dissipated and lost. I was as empty and filled with light as a milkweed pod whose substance has evaporated into the silvery autumn air. I thought of the beautiful ruined courts of an Aztec city in which I once had stood. I drew my hand over the bust of Hermes that I knew with surety would find a second burial in the earth. More ghostly, more insubstantial than that hunting pack which roams the world and its dark thickets forever, I felt the dissolving power of the light which falls across lost columns and bleaching mosaics. Beauty man has, but in the very act of possession he is dissolved. I saw in my hand against the statue the projected shriveling of the skin. Each man repeats that history —endlessly and forever.

Nor has any civilization sustained beauty without returning it to the earth. But perhaps man will eventually achieve this victory, I thought doubtfully, standing a little longer in that timeless eternal light that flowed from the great sculpture. Perhaps he will, I thought again, and went on my way toward the darkness.

## *Brief Comments*

THEORY AND HISTORY. An Interpretation of Social and Economic Evolution. By Ludwig Von Mises. *Yale University Press. $6.00.*

This important book deals with the epistemology of the social sciences, which have as ultimate data the value judgments of individuals and the ideas that engender those value judgments. The knowledge we have about these is not "theoretical," like the knowledge the natural sciences provide about natural events, but "historical," serving mainly to elucidate past events.

History, according to Professor Von Mises, records the conscious effort of man to improve conditions to his satisfaction, and studies the ideas that determine how conditions are ranked and what means are chosen to alter them. Economics studies the choice among means to attain selected ends in the social sphere and shows that social co-operation is the great means for the attainment of all ends. And no unanimity with regard to value judgments is required to make social co-operation work.

This proposition is denied by dialectical materialism and related egalitarian philoso-



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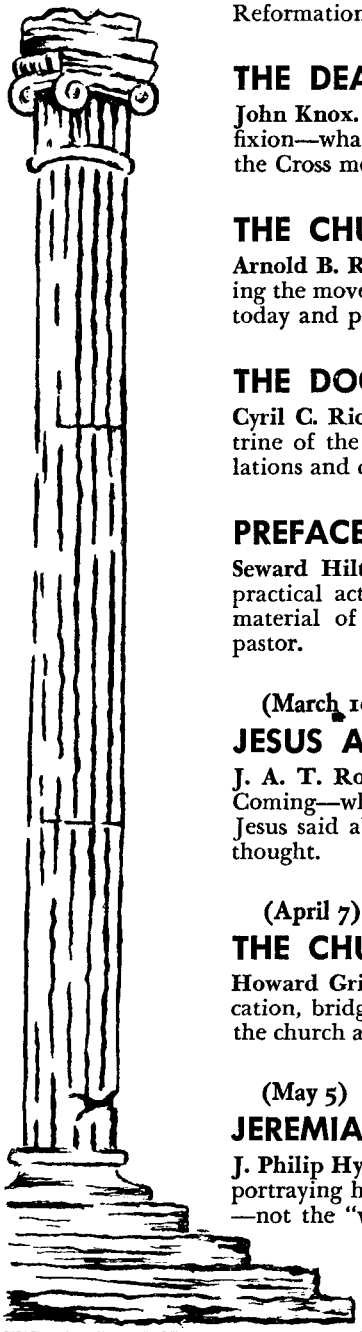

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phies, all tending toward totalitarianism. Von Mises therefore devotes a major portion of his book to a brilliant refutation of dialectical materialism and presents a stout defense of capitalist economics. Unfortunately he imputes to business an intrinsic goodness not always discernible in the real world. Some ideas and value judgments of those in charge of our giant corporations, and labor unions too, actually are not unlike those of the contemporary apostles of dialectical materialism: both groups aspire to absolute power. Their means, of course, differ. One way to escape this dilemma might be to create a situation where an enlightened electorate would be coextensive with a population of active stockholders. Professor Von Mises does not touch upon this; but he has written a most thought-provoking book.

OTTO R. REISCHER

AFTER UTOPIA: The Decline of Political Faith. By Judith N. Shklar. *Princeton University Press.* $5.00.

Mrs. Shklar has written a book which is in form a series of brilliant essays that together may be taken as a review of the decline of the viability of nineteenth- and twentieth-century political philosophies. The work posits the political values of the period of the Enlightenment, and then demonstrates the failures of successive alternative theories and movements—romanticism, socially oriented Christianity, liberalism and radicalism—to achieve tenable alternate political schemes to supplant the optimistic values evidenced in the Enlightenment. Thus, she traces the history of the present-day disenchantment with the beliefs in secularism, intellectualism, radical optimism and any theory about a "law of progress." Because of the atomization of science, theories of functionalism, utilitarianism and totalitarianism, we have been robbed of the ability to believe, naïvely, in progress and good; neither the Christian religion nor the antireligions that have appeared from time to time have re-established the ability to believe, and we are left with a rather critical skepticism with respect to the development of an embracive political philosophy.

This tour across the intellectual peaks of the last three centuries is a demanding one which the author handles deftly. Aside from the comment that a reasoned skepticism may at times be quite preferable to romantic optimism, I should like to suggest that one strand of utopianism that appears to have survived is the science-fiction or science-projection variety.

W. H. CHAPMAN

THE UNITED STATES IN GERMANY, 1945-55. By Harold Zink. *Van Nostrand.* $7.50.

Denying that this proposes to be a detailed and technical study, Dr. Zink, former chief historian in the Office of the United States High Commissioner for Germany, claims a "more modest purpose" for his book in presenting "an overall account of the American role in the occupation of Germany, for the general reader." With knowledge and understanding, the author's keen judgment is brought to bear upon the American policies and operations in Germany during this decade of inglorious failures and perhaps unavoidable mistakes to determine what lessons can now be learned from this experience.

The significant importance of the German occupation for the American people has been critically stressed in this book because it marked the coming of age for the United States in international affairs and was the foundry in which the American postwar foreign policy was hammered out and tempered. It was in Germany that the disintegration of the wartime marriage of convenience between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union engendered the American foreign policy proposing a Western defense organization; that the United States and Britain re-established the close co-operative alliance which had waned since the war's end; that the American foreign aid and information programs were first tested most effectively. The occupation has had an immeasurable effect on the American public because of so many participating Americans, both military and civilian.

A discussion of the present American policy of encouraging the rearmament of West Germany within the North Atlantic



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Treaty Organization, since it has its roots in this decade, would not have been beyond the scope of the book. Such points of discussion would have clarified the continuity of the American position in Germany before and after the occupation.

ROBERT TURVENE

ISLAM INFLAMED: A Middle East Picture. By James Morris. *Pantheon.* $5.00.

The net effect of Morris' book upon the reader will be a rather melancholy one, despite its sprightly style. This is not, however, because of the picture it paints of the decline of the British material presence in the Middle East. Rather, it is because of the lack of any substantial prospects for the establishment of any meaningful rapport between the West and the rising semi-Westernized middle-class movements that constitute the rising force in the area. The sense of Morris' message, although he does not make this explicit, is that it is the very fact that these forces are partially Westernized that makes them so hyperconscious of their points of conflict with the West. This is complicated by the failure of this partial Westernization to overcome the deeply imbedded feeling of difference between the in-group and the out-group that has pervaded Middle Eastern society since the beginning of recorded history.

The wall that separates the European from the Arab has its counterparts within Middle Eastern society itself. It is only necessary to recall what Morris says of the suspicion and distrust that characterize relations between Yazidis and Moslems in Iraq, or Christians and Moslems elsewhere in the area, to understand this. The pervading fear of assimilation and loss of group personality is typical not only of minority relations with the Moslem majority, but also of the relations of the Arab-Moslem majority with the out-group cultures of Europe and America. Zionism itself, in fact, is a manifestation of this same struggle and underlines the verity that this urge is not confined to any one religious or ethnic group.

Hence the title of this book is something of a misnomer: it is not Islam that is inflamed, but the semi-Westernized religio-ethnic concept called Arabism that is inflamed. It is up in arms not only against the forces that thwart it from without, but also against the obstacles that hinder it from within.

H. W. GLIDDEN

NATIONALISM IN COLONIAL AFRICA. By Thomas Hodgkin. *New York University Press.* $3.75.

It has become increasingly apparent that the classical studies of Africa, such as those of Lord Hailey and Leslie Buell, contain assumptions implicit in the colonial attitude which place a limit on their usefulness today. The problems of the relation of Africa to European metropoles and of the administration of traditional societies are questions relating to a period from which Africa has largely emerged. The delicate patterns of African life familiar to the writers of their day have been translated into new institutional forms which have been the focus of a great deal of recent study.

Thomas Hodgkin, in this book, has initiated the difficult task of finding a fresh view of tropical Africa by interpreting and relating the results of these studies. He examines the new phenomenon of African life, the urban clubs, separatist churches, mass parties and trade unions, indicating distinctions and comparisons, raising questions, and suggesting a wholeness of approach to this changed, self-conscious civilization. The result is much more than an inquiry into African nationalism and much less than a "survey" in the style of Lord Hailey. It is a very capable though tentative outline of the subject matter and method which will inspire a great deal of the important writing on African affairs in the coming years.

ROBERT A. CATTELL

JAPAN BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. By Hugh Borton, William J. Jorden, Paul F. Langer, Jerome B. Cohen, Donald Keene and C. Martin Wilbur. Published for the Council on Foreign Relations. *Harper.* $4.75.

At a time when American attention has turned to other places where our presence



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is not welcome and where time for rethinking our policies may be already running out, this book reminds us that Japan is both a country that respects and needs the United States, and an area where our policy makers still have time to adjust advantageously to changing conditions.

In the opening chapter on Japanese politics, Hugh Borton observes the familiar irony that our best friends, the dominant conservatives, have little understanding of democracy, while the vocal Socialists attack us with our own abandoned weapons, the occupation reforms of liberal democracy and disarmament which, though they may embarrass us now, have a deep appeal in Japan. Somehow, Paul F. Langer reiterates in his survey of Japanese communism, we should demonstrate to the Japanese that we respect these ideals which the Communists have exploited so cleverly. Economist Jerome B. Cohen emphasizes that Japan's political stability, particularly its ability to resist communism, rests on foreign trade, notably trade with the United States, where a depression or a resurgence of protectionism could easily ruin Japan. Barring such an economic catastrophe, Langer does not consider native communism a serious threat. In a chapter as lively and immediate as Langer's, Donald Keene discounts literary leftism and finds Japanese literature not basically political but artistic, neither "East" nor "West" but Japanese. *New York Times* correspondent William J. Jorden re-echoes these sentiments in an excellent analysis of Japan's diplomacy. Japan's basic desire is for peace and national integrity, he maintains; and, while we cannot expect Japan to serve as our armed shield in Asia we can keep her firm friendship by respecting her legitimate desires: self-respecting differences of opinion, trade with even Red China, reduction of American forces and greater recognition (before a Russian gesture to return some formerly Japanese northern islands) of Japanese rights in the Bonin-Ryukyu area. This whole study more than compensates for being controversial, uneven and repetitious at times, by being well-informed, timely and stimulating.

DALLAS FINN

THE TRAGIC VISION AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. Edited by Nathan A. Scott, Jr. *Association.* $4.50.

Is there such a thing as Christian tragedy? Are the tragic view of life and the Christian view essentially different? Does Christianity go "beyond tragedy" in the phrase that Niebuhr (and perhaps others) has used? The teacher, the thinker, the reader, the theologian or the layman often will be brought to this question. The present symposium, an admirable and welcome collection of its kind, puts before us twelve essays touching aspects of the problem.

Professor E. L. Cherbonnier, in the first, prepares the way by examining "Biblical Faith and the Idea of Tragedy," noting at the start that "a book appearing fifty years ago under the title *The Tragic Vision and the Christian Faith* is difficult to imagine."

Analysis of the book is impossible in brief, so the best service is to make known its scope. In the succeeding chapters the tragic vision is discussed in the work of certain great writers and thinkers. Roy W. Battenhouse deals with Shakespeare; T. S. K. Scott-Craig, with Milton; Émile Cailliet, with Pascal; Richard Kroner, with Goethe; Paul L. Holmer, with Kierkegaard; Nathan A. Scott, Jr., with Dostoevsky; John E. Smith, with Nietzsche; Randall Stewart, with Hawthorne and Melville; Albert C. Outler, with Freud; J. Hillis Miller, Jr., with Kafka; and Hyatt H. Waggoner, with Faulkner.

This is a valuable book, appropriately dedicated to the late David E. Roberts of Union Theological Seminary, New York.

EDMUND FULLER

MAN AND PEOPLE. By José Ortega y Gasset. Translated from the Spanish by Willard R. Trask. *Norton.* $4.50.

In *Man and People,* his last book before his death, Ortega is concerned with a clear idea of the "social"—an idea that he finds has escaped the sociologists and whose absence has not been missed by the many who discuss affairs of state. Ortega finds that man alone can *be* within himself, along with the radical solitude this capacity brings with it. Minerals and vegetables can only be acted



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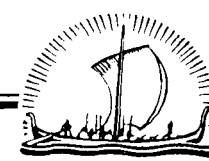




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JAMES THURBER

The Primitive

The Innocent

The Individual

*THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR*

**Summer, 1958**

upon. Animals can react to man but are always beside themselves, forever reacting to stimuli from their environment. Men can sense in each other this capacity of inwardness and find in interindividual relationships danger, and in the alteration with others their personal, unique selves.

The "social," however, is not to be found in this analysis of man. Without recourse, except in philosophy, human beings find themselves bound to observe a "gigantic architecture of usages." As one would expect from the author of *The Revolt of the Masses*, the social is essentially anachronistic, and society's mechanisms are carried on not by men but by people. People are "everybody and at the same time no one in particular."

These phenomena are real enough, and Ortega describes them in a manner that is clear, amusing and extravagant. True to his philosophy, he rejects the ideas of other philosophers in the solitude of his opinions. He claims that language is gesticulation, and we can feel his gestures as we read his words. He sees man's world as an enigma, and we are left with enigmas. A minor enigma is where to place woman in the order of nature, for she is described as attractive because she is inferior to man, is weak and confused. The fundamental enigma is why men become people. Ortega implies that society is made necessary by the jostlings of too many bodies in too small a space. But surely there are better explanations of man's relation to society.

WILLIAM W. HOLLISTER

PAINTING AND REALITY. By Etienne Gilson. Bollingen Series XXXV. *Pantheon*. $7.50.

When does a painting exist? What happens to a painting that is restored or divided? Can paintings actually be duplicated by modern techniques of reproduction? What is the role of abstraction in painting? These are but a few of the questions which Etienne Gilson discusses in this new work on the relation between painting and reality.

Developing his aesthetic from the standpoint of painting itself, Gilson argues that the proper function of creative art is to portray "the inexhaustible realm of possible reality." That which represents things or beings as they are is not painting but picturing. Although he tries to make a strong distinction between the art of painting and the art of picturing, he does admit that there are works which properly belong to both; the work itself must give the answer. This distinction between picturing and painting makes the development of modern art not only desirable but inevitable.

Professor Gilson has turned to the writing of painters themselves for many of the ideas upon which his theory is based. He has included selected writings in an appendix and has also used extensive footnotes. Although the lengthy footnotes will be invaluable to one wishing to pursue Gilson's ideas to their source, they often tend to disrupt the flow of the argument. Much of the information might better have been included in the text.

Although Gilson's conclusions are controversial, his arguments are logically and



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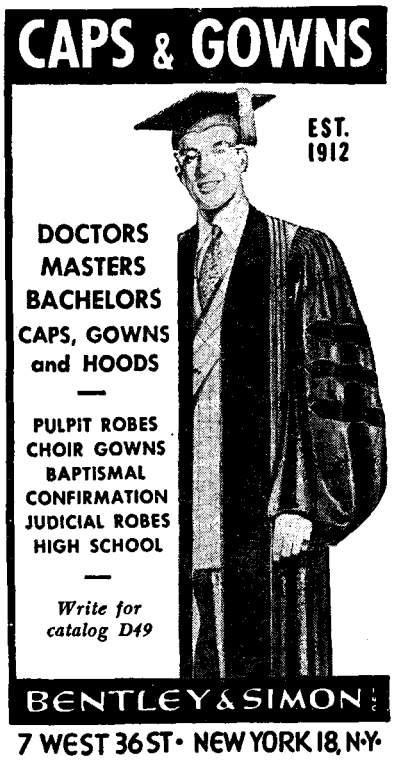


clearly presented within his self-imposed limits. This book will have particular appeal for those interested in an aesthetic theory which recognizes the art, techniques and museums of today.

DOROTHY KERR

MODERN GERMAN PAINTING. By Hans Konrad Roethel. Translated by Desmond and Louise Clayton. *Reynal. $7.50.*

In the brief text of this handsomely produced book, replete with a discriminating selection of reproductions in color and black and white, the author, who is the director of the *Städtischen Kunstsammlungen* in Munich, has managed to give as comprehensive and, on the whole, as accurate a survey of the subject as one might expect, covering the beginnings of expressionism, through the Brücke and the Blaue Reiter, to abstract art.

Appendices, containing excerpts from documents, short biographies, a bibliography and a chronology of important exhibitions, complete a work which might have served as a useful introduction to this relatively unknown field but for the unhappy fact that in this literal and inaccurate translation, the German original becomes simply abstruse and turgid.

Dr. Roethel has been unfortunate in the choice of the translators. Let one example suffice to show the defects of their work. On page 71, in referring to the manner in which Kokoschka applied the paint, and not meant to be pejorative, one reads: "With explosive vehemence they are applied with the finger or knife, rarely with the brush, in greasy, slippery layers." The translation is further marred by the translators' apparent unfamiliarity with terms of art. How else could *fauves* have been rendered as "savages" or *themen* as "topics"?

However, a great deal of laudable effort has been expended to make this an attractive picture book, and as such it may be recommended.

LAURENCE A. LEITE

MAN AND HIS MUSIC: Romanticism and the Twentieth Century. By Winifred Mellers. *Essential. $7.00.*

A note on the jacket introduces the series "Man and His Music" as a project designed to treat music history as "an integral part of man's development . . . discussing it in relation to the other arts." In the present volume, Mr. Mellers is sufficiently absorbed (and absorbing) with the contemplation of a number of the most "romantic" of the romantic composers and the older generation of twentieth-century composers—their personalities and their music.

The author's personality-centered interpretations often lead him to conclusions which are more euphuistic speculation than penetrating deduction. Franck's cyclic form, for example, is not merely an elementary structural device, but a "neurotic obsession." All of Schumann's compositions, we are told, are variations, if only "variations on his own sensibility."

The ground is covered thoroughly; and even if the author is hasty in selling short Strauss's post-*Rosenkavalier* operas, he shows



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considerable initiative in his examinations of John Field, Henri Duparc, Ferruccio Busoni and Charles Ives. Generally speaking, Mr. Mellers is at his best with the moderns, whom he treats with a relatively objective, analytical approach.

The book appears to have been written for the student who is tired of prosaic textbook platitudes, and for the informed amateur who seeks an imaginative, not-too-technical music history. Both will find the smooth literary style most engaging, and both will find the clumsy sallies into abnormal psychology most exasperating.

DONALD L. LEAVITT

SCANDAL AND PARADE: The Theater of Jean Cocteau. By Neal Oxenhandler. *Rutgers University Press. $5.00.*

The labors of Sisyphus pale beside the task Mr. Oxenhandler sets himself in trying to set down, in English, the evanescent thoughts expressed through the years by the French poet-playwright-philosopher.

During service in World War II and later, Mr. Oxenhandler was captivated by the Cocteau mystique: "We see in Cocteau the end result of a long tradition of negation. . . . In his unflinching perseverance to search, to struggle and to forge a poetic vision out of the very stuff of contradiction, we understand the true heroism of his age. . . . He has tried to express the ethics and emotions of heroism in a world without values."

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For Cocteau quite purposely has draped himself in such ample robes of esoteric jargon that when *L'Aigle* was presented on Broadway as *The Eagle Has Two Heads,* Tallulah Bankhead and her producers had the temerity to reverse the ending. No one was the wiser, and Cocteau made no comment.

RICHARD L. COE

INDEX TO THE STORY OF MY DAYS. By Edward Gordon Craig. *Viking. $7.50.*

Beginning in 1905, with *The Art of the Theatre,* Mr. Craig has written several books expounding his revolutionary ideas on the drama and on theatrical production. Although he has never been in a position to put his ideas into practice on an adequate scale, he has influenced the stage the world over. To all intents and purposes his career ended when World War I put an untimely quietus to his School of the Theatre in Florence. At the age of eighty-five, the son of Ellen Terry is a forgotten man, living out his last days in a little town in France.



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The present memoirs, beginning with childhood, carry us only to 1907 and are chiefly concerned with the more intimate aspects of Craig's past. The author recalls with some feeling his fear of the dark as a child, his haphazard education (which he did not mind at all), his fatherlessness.

Craig's love of the theatre dominates the chronicle, which makes no effort at organized prose but conveys the sense of "thinking aloud." Never well off, often in straits, he has not once compromised with his art. One of the world's "Impossibles," he calls himself, openly an egoist, intensely fond of food, susceptible to women. He had earlier complained of being surrounded by a surfeit of women in his childhood. Refreshingly frank and gay, he is not without humor, often whimsical.

The one serious flaw in his diary is that, although it formally ends in 1907, the author permits himself interpolations and comments on occurrences in later years. This in itself is confusing. Moreover, his memory of these later years seems hazy, resulting in at least one instance in a fantastic travesty of facts. Perhaps one should exercise due charity.

JOHN COURNOS

POETS OF TODAY IV. Edited and with an introductory essay by John Hall Wheelock. *Scribner's. $3.95.*

The new trio presented by John Hall Wheelock in volume four of the "Poets of Today" series are already accomplished craftsmen; and all, as Mr. Wheelock notes in his introductory essay, "To Recapture Delight," display the "formal embodiment," the "strategy in the use of language" which mark an increasing, and very welcome, return to lyricism.

George Garrett is a man of exquisite perception: his wit traverses his lines with smiling brevity. Human against natural, personal against abstract, he dovetails opposites, as in, for example, "Summer Abstraction." There is skill and stature here. Matter-of-fact in tone though not in cadence, Theodore Holmes sets unusual imagery in long lines which afford leisurely scope for full explication, deliberate rejoicing in all that God has made. In Robert Wallace's work, Frost and Cummings are in some cases apparent to ear and eye, but the young poet is nevertheless himself, using his sometimes borrowed matériel for quite fresh assaults, ardent, exact, and of a powerful simplicity.

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LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

A HUNDRED YEARS OF EVOLUTION. By G. S. Carter. *Macmillan. $3.75.*

The idea of natural selection as the motive force of evolution occurred to Darwin in 1839 while reading the *Essay on Population* by Malthus. He kept putting off publication, trying to accumulate ever more evidence until, on June 18, 1858, he got, in the morning post, a manuscript from Alfred Russel Wallace outlining the great idea—derived also from reading Malthus. Lyell and Hooker persuaded Darwin to prepare extracts from his own manuscripts, and the Darwin and Wallace essays were read to the meeting of the Linnean Society on July 1, 1858, which thus becomes the birth date of the theory of evolution through natural selection. Darwin immediately got to work on a book-length summary of his theory, and the *Origin of Species* was published on November 24, 1859.



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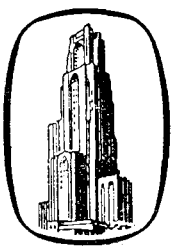

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A hundred years has passed, during which the evolutionary idea has been a major factor in Western thought. Mr. Carter, in *A Hundred Years of Evolution*, has attempted to trace the history of the idea itself, rather than the history of its general intellectual consequences. Almost half of the book is devoted to background: to an examination of why pre-Darwinian theories of evolution received such scant attention and why Darwin's work had such a strong impact on his contemporaries. This seems to me an excellent summary of an extremely interesting episode in the history of thought.

The remainder of the book is devoted to the vicissitudes of the Darwinian ideas in biological developments. Through the last half of the nineteenth century, biologists made little progress in developing or modifying the Darwinian concepts. Then, with the discovery of the genetic mechanisms of inheritance around 1900, the idea of natural selection was abandoned by an influential part of the biological community. Today, natural selection is again a basic part of the biological credo. This too is a very interesting case in the history of science, but I am not sure that Mr. Carter has managed to convey the "feel" of the situation to the nonbiological reader.

MARSTON BATES

DRUGS AND THE MIND. By Robert S. deRopp. *St. Martin's. $4.50.*

Dr. deRopp, a biochemist now working with a large drug firm, here summarizes centuries of recorded experience and pharmacologic research on drugs affecting the mind, with admirable clarity for the general reader. Drugs practically as old as man and the problems of addiction are traced through history, documented with an almost excessive number of personal accounts from the journals and works of such drug experimenters as Havelock Ellis, Baudelaire, Thomas de Quincey and Fitz Hugh Ludlow. Unlike Ludlow, however, the author does not sacrifice scientific impartiality for the sake of literary effect.

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sance rather than a menace, our practice of locking up addicts as criminals rather than as sick minds as "an inexcusable piece of barbarism." Touching hopefully on chemical theories of mental illness, a subject fraught with ignorance, he gives the reader an insight into the tremendous strides made in recent years in the chemotherapy of mental illness, including the growing family of tranquilizers, and points out those further steps we must take if we are ever to understand the subject fully.

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ROBERT R. BELTON, M.D.

DESEGREGATION AND THE LAW: The Meaning and Effect of the School Segregation Cases. By Albert P. Blaustein and Clarence Clyde Ferguson, Jr. *Rutgers University Press. $5.00.*

In this systematic study of the 1954 and 1955 *Segregation Cases*, the authors seek first to explain the Supreme Court's functions in deciding constitutional questions coming from the states and in interpreting constitutional language. They discuss some precedents for the *Segregation Cases* and, in the best part of the book, explain the reasoning process that underlies decision under the Equal Protection Clause, and the use of factual studies to illuminate a rational basis for challenged legislation. This material is further used in an interpretation of the Court's reasoning in the 1954 decisions.

The latter half of the book is a useful outline of material that requires more space than the authors had available: the Court's 1955 implementation decree, subsequent desegregation litigation, enforcement weapons, and state techniques for avoiding integration. The discussion suffers also because it was written before last summer's debate on the civil rights bill and the events at Little Rock. The authors' most interesting suggestion here is that all school boards operating under one state statute be held to begin desegregation when the first board is so enjoined.

Lawyers not professionally involved with the subject matter of this book may find it more useful than may the sophisticated nonlawyers who comprise the rest of its intended audience. The authors at times require of the nonlawyer considerable ability to read legal analysis, and in some cases may mislead him with undue simplification. Inevitably, one may be concerned for the reader's ability to distinguish authoritative statements from interpretation and to detect the authors' occasional fallibility in matters of characterization, analysis or judgment. Yet this scholarly and objective work could contribute much toward returning public debate on desegregation to relevant issues and elevating it to a more enlightened level.

ROBERT H. COLE



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THE QUEST FOR NATIONALITY: An American Literary Campaign. By Benjamin T. Spencer. *Syracuse University Press.* $5.00.

The poetry of Homer, opined Joel Barlow, has been "a serious misfortune to the human race." It was not that Barlow had anything personal against Homer; but demonstrably Homer was not an American and, as a consequence of this misfortune, he could not be trusted to implant "true and useful ideas of glory" in the minds of men.

Barlow is but one among hundreds of his compatriots in this book, the latest to trace the restless, often uncomfortable, attempts of American writers to create a uniquely national literature. Here, chronologically displayed, are the literary representatives of the New World, some tugging their forelocks respectfully before the altar of "Old World culture," but most standing defiantly, hands on hips, declaring their emancipation from so decrepit a deity. The author has cast a fine net. Names, quotations, sources pour out richly, the unknown jostling the famous, the negligible nudging the significant, all adding up to a sense of immense nationalistic pressure.

The author is one of the most industrious and productive students of the critical demand for a national literature. His book is the fruit of more than the single decade of study which he modestly ascribes to it. Inevitably, it is a book for specialists, one they have been expecting. For the nonspecialist, it will be somewhat indigestible. Its lack of a topical or annotated index, its tendency toward turgidity of style, and its sheer mass of information (blurring somewhat its pattern of development and its thesis) will reduce its attractiveness for the general reader. But in the assiduous mining of the lode of American literary nationalism in recent decades, no one has more patiently swished the pan than Mr. Spencer. Here are his nuggets.

CALVIN D. LINTON

THE COMPLETE WRITINGS OF WILLIAM BLAKE. Edited by Geoffrey Keynes. *Random House.* $12.50.

In commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of William Blake's birth, Sir

(*Continued on page 264*)


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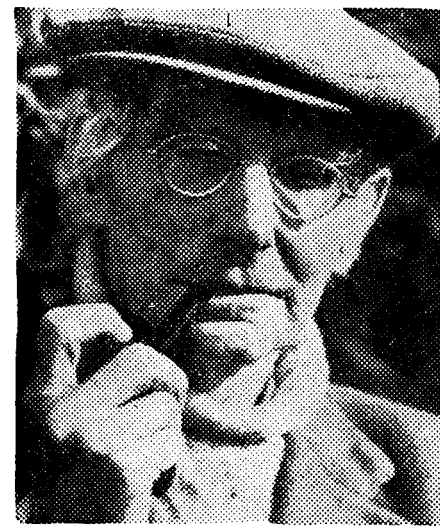

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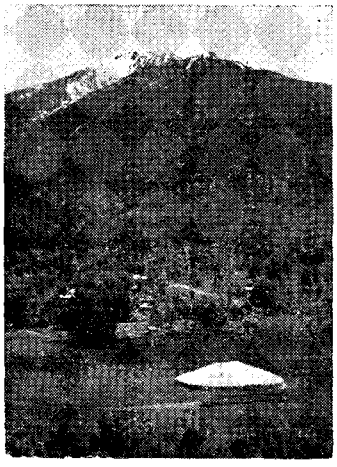

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(*Continued from page 257*)

Geoffrey Keynes has brought forth a new edition of Blake's writings complete with variants. As in 1925, the date of Keynes's previous complete Blake, a handsome book is the result, this time in one portable volume instead of the original three. The editor has provided a more accurate and complete text than before. Except for the letters, which are grouped separately at the back, the writings are arranged chronologically without respect to kinds. Where dates of works are uncertain, the editor explains his conjectures in the notes. The scholar may have cause to regret Keynes's decision to improve occasionally upon Blake's peculiar punctuation. Luckily, facsimiles of Blake's illuminated books, punctuated as he wanted them, are now available in most libraries. In the case of many poems, especially *The Four Zoas,* which is a torture chamber for editors, many of Keynes's editorial decisions are inevitably based upon conjectures; but where he is uncertain about something he tells us so in the notes.

This book is now the definitive edition of Blake's writings, and therefore a necessity for the scholar. For the more general reader, owning it will be a pleasure.

HAZARD ADAMS

THE FINE HAMMERED STEEL OF HERMAN MELVILLE. By Milton R. Stern. *University of Illinois Press. $5.75.*

Employing the instruments of literary criticism as well as dialectic, Milton R. Stern examines Herman Melville. His object is a re-evaluation of Melville's themes and motifs, and his specific subjects are *Typee, Mardi, Pierre* and *Billy Budd.* The thesis of *The Fine Hammered Steel* cannot be summarized without perhaps harmfully foreshortening Mr. Stern's whole line of thought, but it runs as follows:

Melville was completely disenchanted. Differing sharply from his contemporaries, the transcendentalists, whose cosmic idealism presupposed (but could not prove) an Absolute to which mankind was subjoined, Melville sought in the realm of human ex-

(*Continued on page 266*)



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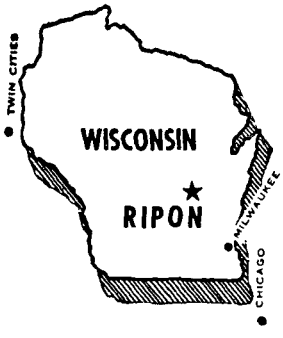
J. EARL MORELAND, *President*
Ashland, Virginia

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(*Continued from page 264*)

perience those "ascertainable" data that offered guidance for man's development as a social being. Melville, therefore, was not a romantic; he was a naturalist, and his place is at the head of "a tradition that extends . . . through Twain, Dreiser, Hemingway, and Faulkner. . . ." Mr. Stern argues that what used to deceive some critics into thinking otherwise is Melville's use of romantic symbols that, in Melville, are never "assigned a total, exterior, one-to-one relationship with a stable and representative quality."

It is obviously impossible to discuss in a brief comment whether the whole line of Mr. Stern's thesis is adequately supported by his critical formulations. The thesis is not new (generally speaking, it is accepted by most present-day Melville scholars), but some of the formulations are; and it can be said of them that they do reveal some refreshing critical insights. What can be said further is that Mr. Stern's prose carries without noticeable strain a rather heavy burden of scholarly paraphernalia.

SAUNDERS REDDING

CHANGING VALUES IN COLLEGE. By Philip E. Jacob. *Harper. $3.50.*

This important study will deservedly be much discussed in academic circles in the months ahead. It is not, however, what one or two sentences on the jacket claim, nor even what the title and subtitle may suggest. Rather than a "critical diagnosis of the shortcomings of present college instruction," it is much more limited in scope. It is properly characterized as an "exploratory" study of "what happens to the values of American college students as a result of the general education they receive in social science."

Seven chapters constituting the main body of the book, while presenting no new facts, provide systematic and, within the indicated limits, thoroughgoing correlations and interpretations of the results of earlier studies. These chapters are preceded by a summary of findings, frankly characterized as "tentative."

The largely negative character of these "findings" will please some readers and greatly disappoint others. The critical reader will, however, be wary of too sweeping generalizations. He will also consider carefully the terminology and the underlying assumptions, explicit or implicit. A somewhat different "slanting" might conceivably yield different conclusions and, as well, a more favorable characterization of the American college student.

A note on further inquiry and a bibliography, or inventory of the data, listing 354 titles, conclude the report.

GOODRICH C. WHITE

* * *

We are grateful for the good things Mr. Sidney Connor said about our book, *The Fabric of Society*, in his review in the Winter 1957-58 issue. But, much as we would like your readers to buy the book, we would not want them to approach it with expectations which would be disappointed.

No doubt Mr. Connor was complimenting us on the scope of *The Fabric of Society*, but in all fairness it is not a "cyclopedia" nor a "survey" or "digest" of "myriad authorities." Although perhaps a quarter of the 777 pages are readings from distinguished writers, the book is essentially our own analysis and appraisal of our society and of the social sciences which study it. We hope that your readers will find in *The Fabric of Society* the "brilliant analyses and new axioms" that Mr. Connor did, but we should like them to buy it only for what it is.

RALPH ROSS
ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG



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# *The Reader Replies*

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles which have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington 9, D. C. Because of limitations of space, we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*

—EDITOR

I cannot commend you too highly for "Faiths for a Complex World" [AS: Autumn, 1957]. For more than thirty years, as a lifelong churchman, I have been trying to cut through the doctrinal verbiage of organized religions and to move toward some comprehension of the universe and my place in it in this, at times, too desolate world. Now that those past sixty have spoken, what will the younger generation say? To find out, I am looking forward with a measure of impatience to the issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR in which their views will be presented.

HARLAN C. KOCH
Ann Arbor, Michigan

I write to congratulate you on the excellent symposium published in the Autumn, 1957, issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR on the theme of faiths in our world today.

I trust you won't mind if I temper my genuine enthusiasm with one relatively minor criticism. I agree fully in the wisdom of not limiting such expressions of faith for the present time to those of us who could conceivably be called "professional religionists." At the same time, however, I am constrained to wonder whether you have not reacted to an equally unjustifiable extreme in inviting not a single member of the clergy of any contemporary religious faith to participate in this symposium.

I would find it hard to believe that there are not among the members of the Christian and Jewish clergy in this nation at least some individuals as much in a position to point spiritual directions for the future as were those whom you included. I would hope that in any future installments in this series some attempt might be made to achieve a better balance among the several disciplines which ought properly be included in an endeavor of this kind.

My criticism is meant in no way, however, to minimize the very positive contribution you have made in this direction.

RABBI ROLAND B. GITTELSOHN
Boston, Massachusetts

Count me as one subscriber-reader both delighted and challenged by your symposium "Faiths for a Complex World," who found the ten-man variety of the essays unusually stimulating for our contemporary rat race in independent thinking.

From the rather sober pessimism of R. L. Duffus, through the humanitarian, autobiographical front-line devotion of René Fueloep-Miller, the old-age, tongue-in-cheek defiance of Gerald W. Johnson, to the philosophic poetry of William Carlos Williams and Melville Cane—this compendium most certainly has something unfinished to say for readers of all ages. And Joseph Wood Krutch's sage comments from the sidelines add suggestions as hard-bitten as any for faith-seekers.

By all means let us have the suggested continuity from the two younger age groups as soon as can be arranged. One might reasonably expect the writers aged forty-to-sixty to be more primed than the sexagenarians, just as the twenty-to-forty group could be more impudent than their elders.

But the disparities of more individual faiths will add scope to the subject, perhaps



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furnishing readers, as well as contestants, more ideas with which to solve the unsolvable problems of a sputnik era.

Thoreau once said that age was "hardly so well qualified for an instructor as youth, for it has not profited so much as it has lost." One awaits, then, the next installment of more *vox populi* pandects.

FRANCIS CLOUGH
Newburgh, New York

What does the topic "Faiths for a Complex World" imply about that world? It would seem to me that, immediately on the statement of the topic, it follows that the world is such that it cannot be lived in on its own terms. I say follows immediately because of a natural contrast between the words "faith" and "complex." One might then ask, In just what way is the world complex? and then, Is this complexity such that it can only be coped with on the basis of an underlying faith?

Let us look at these last questions. What does it mean to say the world is complex? It means, among other things, that our knowledge of it is so advanced as to render simple formulas (at least those proposed to date) inadequate to account for it. The forces at our disposal, one might say, are too great and too heterogeneous to be comprehended under a single, simple formula. Granted that the world is too complex in this sense, does it follow that what is required is a new formula, a faith especially concocted for a complex world?

I think not. In fact, I think that to say this is to repudiate the very spirit and intent of that complexity. Our world is complex precisely because we have insisted that it be understood in its own terms. We have said the world is such that knowledge, not faith, must be the basis of living in it; that by making our formulas more complex we make them richer.

Now it may be that the Editorial Board and the contributors are saying that we cannot cope with these complexities, that we need a faith to fall back on, to live by in this confusing welter of knowledge. If this be the case, it is the most dismal conclusion imaginable. Do you really mean to say this? Is this the result of a long lifetime of acquiring knowledge—the conclusion that knowledge is not adequate to live by?

Presumably then, this is to say yes, knowledge is necessary to understand the world. But you can't direct your life on the basis of that knowledge because it is just too complex. So the proper procedure is to find a faith, a little formula to give meaning to your knowledge, and then one can manage very well.

I cannot accept the implications of "Faiths for a Complex World." I think THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR does a disservice by posing the problem in this way. I have not here commented on any of the contributions in light of my objection, but I feel the contributors, almost to a man, share the magazine's guilt for co-operating in the repudiation of the real task of those whose primary concern is the acquisition of knowledge.

WILLIAM D. ZARECOR
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Since I assumed you would be deluged with opinions and evaluations in response to your editorial request in the Autumn issue, I withheld my own. But now, confronted with the letters you've printed in the Winter issue, I see I have something to argue about.

Granted that "the orthodox are taken care of by their orthodoxy," as Mr. Hamblen says, I don't at all agree that there was nothing here for the unorthodox. I liked Gerald Johnson's good-humored fight on a losing front, and still better Howard Mumford Jones's stoic affirmation (he calls it acquiescence). And how about Krutch? Though his column was not an integral part of the "Faiths" feature, it was linked with it. Surely the question he probes is fundamental for us vulnerable humans battered by a complex world.

By all means extend the experiment to other age groups—and hope their contributions will have the variety of the oldsters'.

And as a Cozzens fan from 'way back, I would like to congratulate the SCHOLAR on carrying the best of all the reviews of *By*



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*Love Possessed.* (But I still think *Guard of Honor* is his best.) It gave me almost as much pleasure as the "reappraisal" of William Faulkner.

MINETTE KUHN
New York, New York

In making any comment upon the ten erudite essays used for the "experiment" in the Autumn issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, the average reader must be at some disadvantage. One's intelligence is challenged. One accepts this and brings to bear such observations as have been made in the course of a varied life.

Humayun Kabir, Cid Ricketts Sumner and Paul B. Sears all held, for me, tenets of faith unshaken, fundamentally, by world events. Herein lies, one cannot help but feel, the nucleus of the whole matter. Through centuries of agony, heroism, advance and retrogression, faith remains. Faith in what?

Faith in the secret and personal belief in God as omnipotent. No war, no cataclysmic happening, no scientific discovery has ever really shaken man's innate trust and expectancy in God. All sorts of ideologies and trends arise, but they do not last. Man is still such a small thing mainly because he does not believe sufficiently. When he does believe and asks for help, amazing things happen. Man is not humble enough—that is, humble in the right way. When man as a whole awakens to the realization that God is love, and that love conquers all, we shall not have to worry about sputniks or the Russians or ourselves. What is needed now is a clear understanding of ourselves in relation to God. As has been said before, "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult, and left untried."

DOROTHY B. CLARY
Chicago, Illinois

The introductory editorial in the Autumn issue aroused my expectation, if not my anticipation. I expected neither the exposition of new philosophies nor suitable answers to the crucial questions. I did expect a variety of approaches and excellent essays in reply to the momentous proposition to which the issue was devoted, and I was not disappointed.

However, in regard to your experimental technique, I must echo in quite another sense your statement that "there are disappointments to report." I expected that one of the few unfamiliar names on the cover would belong to a physicist or mathematician. Surely there are sexagenarians in these two fields who are "people of genuine intellectual stature and achievements," articulate, interesting, and possibly possessed of penetrating insights.

L. E. PORTER
Twenty-nine Palms, California

I have read with great interest the Autumn, 1957, issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, and particularly the series called "Faiths for a Complex World." In general, I would like to say that I certainly hope the series will be continued and am only sorry that it will have to be done over a space of years and not of months.

As a teacher of philosophy, my first reaction was—where are the philosophers? After reading the series my question was answered —you picked them. I believe, however, that a better spread of interests rather than so many of the literary kind would improve the series. I thought the best essay was the one by Paul Sears, and the second best one, not actually a part of the series, was "The Enchanted Glass" by Loren Eiseley.

ALLAN SHIELDS
San Diego, California

*Barren* as faiths to live by in any kind of world are the essays published in the Autumn issue, with perhaps three exceptions. They do not, in my judgment, worthily represent the generation of people over sixty. Perhaps the forty-to-sixty group will do better. Why wait a year to try them?

FLORENCE M. READ
Princeton, New Jersey

The several essays on faith published by THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR in its Autumn,



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1957, issue disclose a basic need for a rational statement of the nature of the inner life, its structure and its growth. This statement should answer questions such as the following: Is there a purpose or plan of the universe? Where does man fit into this plan? What is my relation as an individual to this plan? What is my real life purpose? How is it to be achieved? How does this purpose relate to others?

Formidable queries though these are, our replies to them will reveal the measure of our spiritual maturity. Aided by a long, painful process of self-discovery and acute self-analysis, this inner maturity is brought to birth only by the most intense and knowledgeable effort, and until its catalytic action has worked within the self we cannot hope to speak with real authority. Our philosophies will remain theories, our opinions but hearsay.

The word "spiritual," it seems to me, has been misunderstood. It does not refer solely to religious matters. A. A. Bailey says in *Education in the New Age:* "*All* activity which drives the human being forward toward some form of development—physical, emotional, mental, intuitional, social—if it is in advance of his present state is essentially spiritual in nature and is indicative of the livingness of the inner divine entity."

Too many of us in this day of scientific marvels are still spiritual illiterates. We do not know ourselves, our minds, our inmost beings. In school we acquire the tools for economic survival. But we do not necessarily gain measuring devices for, nor the content from which to build, ethical standards, moral tone, wise judgment, compassionate understanding and warm human love of our own kind. The derivations of these qualities and the mechanics of their cultivation are as little known and understood as was the New World by its discoverers. To quote René Fueloep-Miller, "the deepest urge in human nature is to believe in something that gives life purpose and meaning." So far we have failed to satisfy this urge.

We do not need more do-gooders. But we do need more spiritually literate people who know what goodness is, how it is attained, why it is worth struggling for, and who can make a clear statement of their beliefs for the guidance of others. The ten essays on faith have pointed up that need. For their publication THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR deserves the highest commendation and support.

FRANCES SEGRAVES
New York, New York

For the Autumn issue you deserve unreserved applause. I hope that returns will justify pursuit of the experiment and that next year you will sample the serious thought of another age group.

I am truly grateful for the intimacy to which we were admitted by the contributors. It seems to me that they have given a new dimension to the symposium method in the area of personal faiths or philosophies of life. There was enough evidence that they hear the music of different drummers to dispel any notion of effort to conform to any norm save that of candor.

I did feel that Gerald W. Johnson, whose writing over the years I have found to be generally stimulating, had, regrettably, reduced the sweep of the proposition by restating one of its implications in the form of the question to which he addressed his very interesting remarks. I could wish that he had cocked his head this way and that, caught his light from other facets of the proposition; else, that he had permitted his usually keen perception to range more widely over the possibility that if personal, individual freedom of spirit may not often be discovered at leadership levels, there is no necessary indication that it cannot be found more frequently elsewhere.

A case of sorts might be made, I think, for the proposition that loss or diminution of individual freedom is the lawful price exacted from those who seek positions of leadership, whether achieved by step promotions on the basis of conformity, or at least an absence of heresy, within institutionalized ideologies or enterprises, or by action of the electorate of a democracy,



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which by definition moves toward reality as its electorate is able to secure satisfactory responses to a reasonably accurate synthesis of its desires, and toward ideality as its desires approximate informed and enlightened rationality.

I wonder if there is an occupational hazard for those engaged upon concentrated scrutiny of the conduct of the men who aspire to or who achieve leadership: an exposure to myopic unawareness of the many free souls whose ideas and concerns influence such leadership more, perhaps, than it influences them. Theirs may be the voices Woodrow Wilson had in mind: ". . . the inarticulate voices that stir in the night watches, apprising the lonely sentinel of what the day will bring forth." They are those of George Gissing's great brotherhood of bright souls, "living courageously, seeing the good wherever it may be discovered, undismayed by portents, doing what they have to do with all their strength. . . . and their faith is one, the cult of reason and of justice."

CHARLES H. MEACHAM
Los Angeles, California

I have just been down on my hands and knees lapping up your wonderful series on "Faiths for a Complex World." What a stimulus!

Marginally, it is almost amusing to note how universally the authors seemed to take your invitation as Old Father Time tapping them on the shoulder!

In trying to find the universal in the essays, I seemed to discover two sorts of conclusions. This may be illustrated by the old story of the two elderly ladies who had been quarreling for some time. Someone brought word to one of them that the other had accused her of being frivolous. She replied, "Well, I may be frivolous; but at least, I'm living, while she is just living on!"

Jones most pronouncedly, and to some extent Johnson and Sumner, come out with courageous hope which is, however, just hanging on. Johnson wants to have fun doing it. Hough doesn't get anywhere, both because he is so "tolerant," and because he thinks of the function of mysticism as only digging caves for refugees, which is essentially a misunderstanding of Christianity.

It is also a bit amusing to see some of the authors try so hard to duck "mysticism." To me, it is the essayists such as Fueloep-Miller who treat mysticism forthrightly that come out with the best answers. Duffus shies like a carriage horse and comes out in semi-darkness. Hough, who has some valorous thrusts at our current morality, shies, as I have said. Mrs. Sumner, who at least in one sentence in which she mentions Jesus the Christ, has some powerful religious teaching, but ends up "under vine and fig tree." Humayun Kabir writes a brilliant commentary on modern faith, but apparently does not care much for the answer.

The series exhibits sprightliness and depth; it can build up a fine body of speculation on "everlastingness," even if by the juniors.

THE REVEREND CORRELL M. JULIAN
Exeter, California

The idea of "faiths to live by" was an inspiration that reaches far beyond itself and brings those of us past sixty to the other side of despair, which is hope.

To hear these voices of my generation speak with wisdom and the authority of experience in behalf of ideas and ideals that have shaped my life is to be rescued from the molasses sea of mawkish religiosity that tries to suck us down.

It has been hard and increasingly lonely to withstand the pressures to conform in this aggressively anti-intellectual, militaristic, parochial community, and to try to combine respect for individuals with rejection of their creeds and opinions. To know that there is such a group as you have brought together in this issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR gives one strength to go on.

One delightful aspect of the issue is the basic humanity of feeling beneath the stimulating diversities of the writers. Gathered in pursuit of a common aim such as peace by means of peaceful, not war-shaking, methods, what might we not still be able to accomplish! The only one I would exclude



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is René Fueloep-Miller, whose faith seemed to me an egotistical, cleverly concealed apologia for ecclesiasticism. But I've always mistrusted everything of his I have read. The one closest to me is Joseph Wood Krutch.

I think your suggestion of further statements by groups of younger writers would be helpful in extending lines of communication, now often sadly broken, between generations. Please go on with it.

ETHEL BURNS BREED
Cornwall, New York

I am wondering *why* the *foreign* recipients of your request to contribute to the faiths symposium refused, and if Schweitzer was among them. Too bad, for we think of an American aggregation in this respect as being possibly too starry-eyed. But I think your idea is excellent, the results so far most interesting, and I shall watch for further contributions with great interest.

Of those in the Autumn issue just received, I thought the first two easily the most convincing; Johnson is a bit smart-alecky, Jones a bit precious (and too bad, for the Stoics have a case meriting better support or exposition than he gives them).

WILLIAM H. ARCHER
Elon College, North Carolina

I wish to express my great appreciation of "Strait Is the Gate" in the Winter issue of the SCHOLAR. It is by far the finest presentation of the ideal college professor I have ever read. Every college and university president and every professor in the field of higher education should read it.

GREGORY D. WALCOTT
New York, New York

As one of the members of the Lehigh University Library staff responsible for planning exhibits, I am constantly looking for new ideas. As I read the "Neglected Books" section of the Autumn, 1956, issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, it occurred to me that this was a possible subject for an exhibit. After checking the titles in our card catalog, those we did not already have in our collection were ordered. From September 23 until October 16, 1957, we exhibited in our three lobby display cases a dozen of these books, while on the bulletin board we displayed the jackets of a number of others. A library announcement which listed all the titles mentioned in your article was sent to the faculty. Additional copies were placed on the loan desk for students and other interested people. The student newspaper, the *Brown and White*, contained an article concerning the exhibit in its issue of September 27. Faculty and student response has been most enthusiastic, and interest in reading these books, which seem to be undeservedly neglected, has increased to the point where we have waiting lists for those books displayed in the cases.

RUTH C. PACE
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania



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